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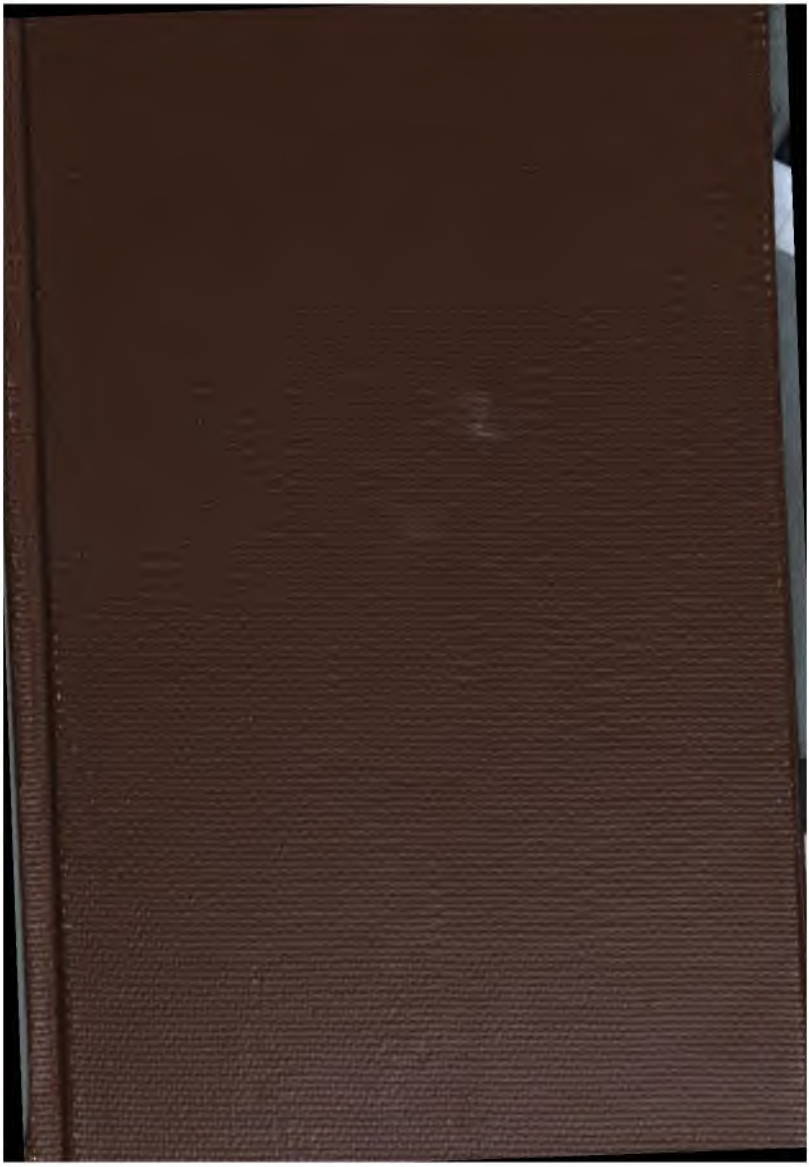

VIEWS

OF

AMERICAN SLAVERY,

TAKEN

A CENTURY AGO.

Anthony Benezet,

John Wesley.

"WHATSOEVER YE WOULD THAT MEN SHOULD DO TO YOU, DO YE EVEN SO TO THEM; FOR THIS IS THE LAW."—MATT. vii. 12.

"IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR US TO SUPPOSE THESE CREATURES TO BE MEN, BECAUSE, ALLOWING THEM TO BE MEN, A SUSPICION WOULD FOLLOW THAT WE OURSELVES ARE NOT CHRISTIANS."

MONTESQUIEU: *Spirit of Laws*, book xv. chap. 5.

PHILADELPHIA:

PUBLISHED BY THE

ASSOCIATION OF FRIENDS FOR THE DIFFUSION OF RELIGIOUS AND USEFUL KNOWLEDGE.

1858.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION.

THE object of the following compilation is to present to the American reader the opinions of some of the truly great and good men of the eighteenth century on the subject of Negro Slavery.

The attention of the public has been so long absorbed by the consideration of its economical and political bearings, that there is great danger lest its moral and religious aspect may be entirely lost sight of.

An investigation of the whole subject, upon these grounds, becomes, at the present time, a most especial and important duty, when this great question of Slavery seems not only to agitate our public councils, and almost to endanger our national existence; but to per-

meate even the local politics of every section of the Union.

Moreover, it is brought seriously to the attention of every citizen of the United States by the obligations of our national law, which enforces, under heavy penalties, his individual co-operation with the slave-holder in the assertion of a claim to ownership in a human being; as well as by the alleged decisions of our highest judicial tribunal that slavery is under constitutional protection in all the common territories of the Union.

In this view of the case, it has been thought that great advantage might arise from an endeavour, at this time of excitement, calmly to recur to first principles with reference to so important a subject, to trace the title of American Slavery back to its origin; and to ascertain something of the religious opinion of the last century upon the merits of the question.

In the course of this investigation many tracts and pamphlets contained in our libraries were carefully examined; and two essays have been selected as comprising the substance of the whole. They present in earnest and

simple language the purest religious sentiment of that age, and, as such, are commended to the Christian community of our own.

It will be found, perhaps, that the professing church of the nineteenth century has retrograded somewhat from the uncompromising zeal and vigilance which characterized it in the eighteenth; and that it may be shrinking at this time from bearing before the world that testimony which it then fearlessly avowed against the whole system of American Slavery.

EXTRACTS

FROM THE WRITINGS OF

ANTHONY BENEZET

ON THE SUBJECT OF THE

AFRICAN SLAVE-TRADE

AND

AMERICAN SLAVERY.

PUBLISHED ORIGINALLY IN PHILADELPHIA,

EXTRACTS

FROM THE WRITINGS OF

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AND

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PUBLISHED ORIGINALLY IN PHILADELPHIA,

greater risk of losing it by a withdrawal induced him to enter the lists. With no other motive than to obtain a higher scholastic fame, this great champion of the African race entered on his first investigations into the history of their sufferings and their wrongs.

Little attenti[illegible] been drawn to the subject in Engl[illegible], and he found himself at a great l[illegible]ial materials for his work. "I was [illegible]y," says he, "when, going by accide[illegible]'s house, I took up a newspaper then [illegible] table. One of the articles which [illegible]tice was an advertisement of Anthony Benezet's, 'Historical Account of Guinea,' &c. I soon left my friend and his paper, and, to lose no time, hastened to London to buy it. In this precious book I found almost all I wanted."

The result is well known to the world: the essay was completed, the first prize won, and from that day Clarkson dedicated his talents and his life to the service of the oppressed African; with what success, it is needless here to tell.

The author of this little volume, which may almost be said to have thus laid the foundation for the abolition of the slave-trade in England, and in fact over the world, did not live to witness the fruits

of his labors, having died in Philadelphia in the year 1784.

And while Clarkson's fame is cherished, not only in his native land, but wherever humanity is respected, the name of Anthony Benezet is now hardly known beyond the limits of the city where the greater part of his life was spent, and even here is fast passing from our memories.

With a view of recalling it somewhat to the readers of the extracts from his writings now presented, as well as to lend to them if possible some additional interest, the following brief outline of his life and labors is offered. A more extended biography should, however, at an early day be prepared, with such copious selections from his correspondence and general writings, as shall present to the world a more adequate tribute to the memory of this excellent man.*

* In Clarkson's History of the Abolition of the Slave-Trade will be found a lively notice of Anthony Benezet's life and labors. An interesting memoir of him was also published in 1817, by the late Roberts Vaux. From these, together with such other cotemporary materials as could be obtained, this sketch is compiled. Some valuable allusions and anecdotes with regard to him occur in the English biographies of the Countess of Huntingdon, George Whitefield, and other distinguished characters of that day, with whom Benezet corresponded. In our own

Anthony Benezet was born at St. Quentin, in the province of Picardy, France, in the year 1713. His parents, although wealthy and respectable, were associated with those Protestants contemptuously termed Huguenots;* and, in the persecutions which followed the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, were driven from their native country and forced to take refuge in Holland, which they reached through many difficulties and dangers.

The family afterwards removing to London, Anthony Benezet, on the completion of a good school-education, was placed with an eminent mercantile firm in that city, to acquire a knowledge of the business. Not feeling satisfied, however, to enter on commercial pursuits, he did not serve out his apprenticeship;

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country the great scarcity of such memoranda is attributed to a deference, on the part of his friends, to his own unfeigned humility, and his disapprobation of overrated eulogies of the dead. He requested that they would publish no posthumous memorial of him; though, added he, "If they will not regard my desire, they may say Anthony Benezet was a poor creature, and, through divine favor, was enabled to know it."

* History informs us that one of this family, François Benezet, afterwards perished on the scaffold at Montpellier in France, in 1755, upholding nobly to the multitude around him the doctrines he had preached and then suffered for.—*Felice's History of French Protestants.*

but adopted from preference a mechanical employment, as more congenial to his retired and thoughtful frame of mind.

He appears, at the early age of fourteen, to have joined the Society of Friends, called Quakers; and to have adopted from conviction their religious views and testimonies. In his eighteenth year he removed with the family to Philadelphia, where his brothers embarked largely in a successful and lucrative business, a share of which was freely offered to him. He adhered, however, to the decision deliberately arrived at when in London, that the absorbing engagements of a commercial career were incompatible with that entire dedication of life to the cause of religion and humanity to which he felt himself called. Yet it was with some difficulty, after attempting for a time manufacturing as well as mechanical pursuits, without satisfaction to his mind, that he finally settled on the profession of a teacher as the calling most congenial to his own views of duty, and most likely to be useful to his fellow-men. In this choice, as well as in the persevering devotion of his time and talents for more than forty years to the duties he had chosen, Anthony Benezet appears, from all accounts, to have been actuated entirely by the most disinterested and Christian motives.

Endearing his scholars to him, by an affectionate and fatherly manner and a conscientious interest in their welfare, he yet carefully studied their dispositions and character, and sought to develop, by gentle assiduity, the peculiar talents of each individual pupil. With some, persuasion was his only incitement, others he stimulated to a laudable emulation; and even with the most obdurate he seldom, if ever, appealed to any other corrective, than that sense of shame, and fear of public disgrace, which he greatly preferred to any corporal punishment. In all these respects he was far in advance of his age in the instruction of the young. Clarkson, who had access to Benezet's extensive foreign correspondence, expressly records of him, that on such great questions as that of Slavery, he labored to imbue his pupils with correct and thorough convictions of the right; believing that, by thus annually sending forth a considerable number of well-trained youth, he was most effectively influencing the future public sentiment.

Yet, while thus laboriously discharging his daily avocations, in the course of which he compiled two introductory works for the use of schools, much superior to the elementary treatises then in vogue, and which obtained considerable reputation abroad and at home, Anthony Benezet appears to have been also distin-

guished in every benevolent public work and movement of the day.

It is not intended at this time to follow him in these various labors, a recital of which would fill a large volume. It may be enough to say that he was truly a Christian philanthropist; most unostentatiously laboring, by personal influence, by correspondence, and by aid of the public press, for the promotion of any cause of humanity he was engaged in, or for the suppression of iniquity and wrong.

He published several tracts and pamphlets on the evils of intemperance.

The subject of war, with all its attendant horrors, was brought closely home to him by the trials of the American Revolution. The sufferings of the soldiers, and of the inhabitants on whom they were quartered, formed the object of many a visit to the officers' camp or to the public hospitals; and the iniquity of the whole system, especially its entire inconsistency with the Christian profession, impressed him so deeply that he printed and circulated, in large numbers, a treatise entitled "Thoughts on the Nature of War;" commending it by special letters to persons of distinction in Europe and America, for their perusal and reflection.

In 1778, during the excitement of the American

Revolution, he issued a small work entitled "Serious Reflections on the Times, addressed to the Well-Disposed of every Religious Denomination." The spirit of the whole book may be gathered from its closing paragraph:—

"Let us not, beloved brethren, forget our profession as Christians, nor the blessing promised by Christ to the peace-makers; but let us all sincerely address our common Father for ability to pray, not for the destruction of our enemies, who are still our brethren, the purchase of our blessed Redeemer's blood, but for an agreement with them. Not in order to indulge our passions in the gains and delights of this vain world, and forget we are called to be as pilgrims and strangers in it, but that we may be more composed, and better fitted for the kingdom of God; that, in the dispensations of His good pleasure, He may grant us such a peace, as may prove to the consolation of the Church, as well as the nation, and be on earth an image of the tranquillity of heaven."

His sympathies were deeply enlisted for the aboriginal inhabitants of America, and he labored much for the general protection of the rights of this people, as well as for the relief of particular instances of suffering among them.

A pamphlet published shortly before his death, entitled "Some Observations on the Situation, Disposition, and Character of the Indian Natives of the Continent," was thought by his friends to be the prelude to a more extended work on the same subject, had life permitted.

He had strong faith in the integrity of the Indian character, and believed that, if treated with justice and consideration, much, if not all, of the bloodshed and cruelty of the wars with these tribes might be averted. In 1763, when the British General Amherst was at New York, preparing for an Indian campaign, Anthony Benezet addressed him an earnest and able letter on their behalf, concluding with the pathetic appeal, "And, further, may I entreat the general, for our blessed Redeemer's sake, from the nobility and humanity of his heart, that he would condescend to use all moderate measures, if possible, to prevent that prodigious and cruel effusion of blood, that deep anxiety and distress, that must fill the breasts of so many helpless people should an Indian war be once entered upon ?"

In the year 1755, the arrival in Philadelphia of great numbers of the exiled Acadians afforded Benezet a wide field for his benevolent labors. Driven from their homes in Nova Scotia, in express viola-

tion of treaty stipulations, by the cruelty of the British commander, nearly seven thousand of these unhappy neutrals were dispersed along the American coast, from Massachusetts Bay to New Orleans, friendless, and destitute of even the necessaries of life.

Anthony Benezet, being enabled to converse with the exiles in their own language, and feeling his sympathies especially enlisted on their behalf, immediately undertook the charge of providing asylums for the aged and helpless, and employment for such as were able to work. All his friends were laid under tribute for the relief and support of his Acadian colony. One gave, at his request, the necessary grounds, others joined him in furnishing the funds to erect the buildings required for their accommodation, and Benezet himself purchased and disbursed, for a considerable time, all the provisions and clothing they needed. He visited carefully the sick and infirm among them; extended religious consolation to the dying; and when all was over, performed the last offices of respect to their remains.

A most interesting history could be written of his labors, for years, on behalf of this poor people.

But, while his heart seemed thus open to every variety of human suffering and woe, whether among

the exiles of his own race, or the aborigines of America, the principal share of his sympathies and charities, during a long life, was devoted to the service of a still more oppressed and degraded people.

About the year 1750, long before the members of his own Society had acted unitedly upon the subject, Anthony Benezet began to arouse public attention to the horrors of the African slave-trade and the enormous evils of American slavery.

Once enlisted in the cause of the oppressed negro, it is impossible to conceive of a more untiring and faithful devotion than he manifested, during the remainder of his life, to this subject. Clarkson testifies that Anthony Benezet was one of the most zealous and vigilant advocates that the cause of human freedom ever possessed.

No means were left untried to attract public notice, and form a correct public sentiment, with regard to this important subject. The almanacs, then retaining their hold on the popular mind which Dr. Franklin had established, contained, year after year, notices of some glaring instance of cruelty or wrong to the negroes, from the pen of Benezet.

Innumerable tracts and pamphlets were written and circulated by him, reproducing, with a variety and ingenuity truly wonderful, the complicated evils of the

whole system of slavery. "If a person called on him," says Clarkson, "who was going a journey, his first thoughts usually were, how he could make him an instrument in favor of this important cause. He seemed to have been born and to have lived for the promotion of it, and he never omitted the least opportunity of serving it."

From these short tracts and notices in the press of the day, Anthony Benezet proceeded to more extended and laborious publications. In 1762 appeared the second edition of a work entitled "A Short Account of that Part of Africa inhabited by the Negroes, with general observations on the slave-trade and slavery;" from which some extracts will be given in this little volume.

In the year 1767 he published "A Caution and Warning to Great Britain and her Colonies on the Calamitous State of the Enslaved Negroes in the British Dominions."

This little book, which forms the principal basis of the compilation, now presented, of Benezet's writings on this subject, produced long afterwards a great sensation, both in England and America; especially in the Society of which he was a member. Clarkson states that the Yearly Meeting of London recommended all the Quarterly Meetings, in the year 1785,

to distribute this book, which was accordingly forwarded to them for that purpose. "On receiving it," says he, "they sent it among several public bodies, the regular and dissenting clergy, justices of the peace, and particularly among the great schools of the kingdom, that the rising youth might acquire a knowledge, and at the same time a detestation, of this cruel traffic. The schools of Westminster, the Charter-House, St. Paul's, Merchant Tailors', Eton, Winchester, Harrow, and several of the academies, were visited by deputations of the Society, to know if their masters would allow the scholars to receive it."

Who can tell how much of that public opinion was thus formed which, many years afterwards, responded to the efforts of Buxton and his friends, to abolish entirely the whole system of slavery in the British dominions?

But the publication destined to be productive of the most important results, was issued by Benezet in 1767, after years of patient research in collecting authentic materials for his work. It was entitled "An Historical Account of Guinea, in Situation, Produce, and the General Disposition of its Inhabitants; with an Enquiry into the Rise and Progress

of the Slave-Trade, its Nature and Calamitous Effects."

"This book," says Clarkson, feelingly, "became instrumental beyond any other work ever before published in disseminating a proper knowledge and detestation of this trade." The authorities quoted in this volume are all of the most unquestionable character; and no successful effort was ever made to controvert them.

He was unwearied also in collecting statistics and facts from the negroes themselves, with regard to their sufferings; and would often be seen on the wharves surrounded by a group of these poor people, whose story afterwards served as a basis for an argument or a touching appeal, in one of the almanacs or papers of the day.

Anthony Benezet did not, however, confine his exertions to the publication of treatises on the subject. He corresponded most extensively upon it, with influential individuals in Europe and America, and also labored personally to awaken an interest for the cause, in the community where he resided.

Believing that the elevation of the free people of color was not only a duty owing to them directly, but would prove one of the most efficient influences in the general admission and restoration of the rights

of the whole race, he established an evening school in Philadelphia for their instruction, which he taught gratuitously, after the other labors of the day were over. When afterwards the Society of Friends became interested in this subject and it was proposed to enlarge the benefaction, Anthony Benezet contributed liberally himself, and was active in soliciting funds from others for the erection of a building for this purpose.

Finding that this school required more attention than his enfeebled strength enabled him to devote to it, while also in charge of the academy which for nearly half a century he had successfully conducted, he relinquished the emoluments of the latter, and for the last two years of his life spent most of his time at the colored school. Nor did his devotion to it end with his life. By his last will he directed that all his little fortune, after the death of his widow, should, with the exception of a few small legacies, be invested as a permanent fund for its support.

He leaves the following remarkable testimony to the intelligence and aptitude for learning of this generally-despised race:—"I can with truth and sincerity declare that I have found amongst the negroes as great variety of talents as among the like numbers of whites;

and I am bold to assert that the notion, entertained by some, that the blacks are inferior in their capacities, is a vulgar prejudice, founded on the pride or ignorance of their lordly masters, who have kept their slaves at such a distance as to be unable to form a right judgment of them."

The labors of this excellent man were now fast drawing towards a close; his constitution, for many years quite feeble, at the age of seventy seemed to break down entirely, and, in the spring of 1784, he sank into a rapid decline.

As it became known that Anthony Benezet was critically ill, it is related that his friends and fellow-citizens crowded round his dwelling, expressing their ardent solicitude for his recovery and restoration to usefulness in the world. And, when this was announced to be impossible, his biographer states that "the desire of many persons to see him was such as to induce an indulgence of their wish. They seemed to want his dying benediction. They were admitted, and the chamber in which he lay and the passage that led to it, were filled with approaching and retiring mourners."

He received their visits with kindness; but the few words that escaped his lips indicated the deepest self-humiliation. "I am dying," said he to those

about him, at one time, "and feel ashamed to meet the face of my Maker, I have done so little in His cause."

A vast concourse of people, numbering several thousands of the citizens of Philadelphia, of every rank and condition in life, attended the remains of Anthony Benezet to their last resting-place. It was said by many eye-witnesses of the scene to have been the largest and most remarkable assemblage that had ever gathered, on such an occasion, in Philadelphia. The principal men of the city and State were there, embracing various trades and professions; and among them were several hundred negroes, who stood weeping around his grave. They knew they had lost a father and a friend; and, while they could not then foresee the full fruits of his labors, or rightly estimate his character, all classes acknowledged that a great man had that day fallen among them.

CAUTION AND WARNING

TO

GREAT BRITAIN AND HER COLONIES

ON THE CALAMITOUS STATE OF

THE ENSLAVED NEGROES IN THE BRITISH DOMINIONS.

At a time when the general rights and liberties of mankind, and the preservation of those valuable privileges transmitted to us from our ancestors, are become so much the subjects of universal consideration, can it be an inquiry indifferent to any, how many of those who distinguish themselves as the advocates of liberty remain insensible and inattentive to the treatment of thousands and tens of thousands of our fellow-men, who, from motives of avarice and the inexorable decree of tyrant custom, are at this very time kept in the most deplorable state of slavery in many parts of the British dominions?

The intent of publishing the following sheets is more fully to make known the aggravated iniquity attending the practice of the slave-trade, whereby many thousands of our fellow-creatures, as free as ourselves by nature, and equally with us the subjects of Christ's redeeming grace, are yearly brought into inextricable and barbarous bondage, and many, very many, to miserable and untimely ends.

The truth of this lamentable complaint is so obvious to persons of candor under whose notice it hath fallen, that several have lately published their sentiments thereon as a matter which calls for the most serious consideration of all who are concerned for the civil or religious welfare of their country. How an evil of so deep a dye hath so long not only passed uninterrupted by those in power, but hath even had their countenance, is indeed surprising, and charity must suppose in a great measure to have arisen from this, that many persons in government, both of the clergy and laity, in whose power it hath been to put a stop to the trade, have been unacquainted with the corrupt motives which give life to it, and the dying groans, which daily ascend to God, the common Father of mankind, from the broken hearts of those his deeply-oppressed creatures; otherwise the powers of the earth would not, I think I may venture to say, could not, have so long authorized a practice so inconsistent with every idea of liberty and justice, which, as the learned James Foster says, bids that God, which is the God and Father of the Gentiles unconverted to Christianity, most daring and bold defiance, and spurns at all the principles both of natural and revealed religion.

Much might justly be said of the temporal evils which attend this practice, as it is destructive of the welfare of human society, and of the peace and prosperity of every country, in proportion as it prevails. It might be also shown that it destroys the

bonds of natural affection and interest whereby mankind in general are united; that it introduces idleness, discourages marriages, corrupts the youth, ruins and debauches morals, excites continual apprehensions of dangers and frequent alarms, to which the whites are necessarily exposed from so great an increase of a people that, by their bondage and oppression, become natural enemies, yet at the same time are filling the places and eating the bread of those who would be the support and security of the country. But, as these and many more reflections of the same kind may occur to a considerate mind, I shall only endeavor to show, from the nature of the trade, the plenty which Guinea affords its inhabitants, the barbarous treatment of the negroes, and the observations made thereon by authors of note, that it is inconsistent with the plainest precepts of the gospel, the dictates of reason, and every common sentiment of humanity.

In an Account of Part of North America, published by Thomas Jeffery, printed 1761, speaking of the usage the negroes received in the West India Islands, he thus expresses himself:—"It is impossible for a human heart to reflect upon the servitude of these dregs of mankind without in some measure feeling for their misery, which ends but with their lives. . . . Nothing can be more wretched than the condition of this people. One would imagine they were framed to be the disgrace of the human species, banished from their country, and deprived of that

blessing liberty, on which all other nations set the greatest value; they are in a manner reduced to the condition of beasts of burden: in general a few roots, potatoes especially, are their food, and two rags, which neither screen them from the heat of the day nor the extraordinary coolness of the night, all their covering; their sleep very short; their labor almost continual; they receive no wages, but have twenty lashes for the smallest fault."

The situation of the negroes in our Southern provinces on the continent is also feelingly set forth by George Whitefield, in a letter from Georgia to the inhabitants of Maryland, Virginia, North and South Carolina, printed in the year 1739, of which the following is an extract:—"As I lately passed through your provinces in my way hither, I was sensibly touched with a fellow-feeling of the miseries of the poor negroes. Whether it be lawful for Christians to buy slaves and thereby encourage the nations from whom they are bought to be at perpetual war with each other, I shall not take upon me to determine: sure I am, it is sinful, when bought, to use them as bad, nay, worse, than as though they were brutes; and, whatever particular exceptions there may be, (as I would charitably hope there are some,) I fear the generality of you that own negroes are liable to such a charge; for your slaves, I believe, work as hard, if not harder, than the horses whereon you ride. These, after they have done their work, are fed and taken proper care of; but many negroes, when

wearied with labor in your plantations, have been obliged to grind their own corn after they return home. Your dogs are caressed and fondled at your tables; but your slaves, who are frequently styled dogs or beasts, have not an equal privilege: they are scarce permitted to pick up the crumbs which fall from their master's table; not to mention what numbers have been given up to the inhuman usage of cruel taskmasters, who, by their unrelenting scourges, have ploughed their backs, and made long furrows, and at length brought them even to death. When, passing along, I have viewed your plantations cleared and cultivated, many spacious houses built, and the owners of them faring sumptuously every day, my blood has frequently almost run cold within me to consider how many of your slaves had neither convenient food to eat nor proper raiment to put on, notwithstanding most of the comforts you enjoy were solely owing to their indefatigable labors. The Scripture says, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. Does God take care for oxen, and will he not take care of the negroes also? Undoubtedly he will. Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you: behold, the provision of the poor negroes, who have reaped down your fields, which is by you denied them, crieth; and the cries of them which reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. We have a remarkable instance of God's taking cognizance of and avenging the quarrel of poor

slaves, 2 Sam. xxi. 1. There was a famine in the days of David, three years, year after year, and David inquired of the Lord, and the Lord answered, It is for Saul and his bloody house, because he slew the Gibeonites. Two things are here very remarkable: First, these Gibeonites were only hewers of wood and drawers of water, or, in other words, slaves like yours. Secondly, that this plague was sent by God many years after the injury, the cause of the plague, was committed. And for what end were this and such like examples recorded in Holy Scriptures? Without doubt, for our learning. For God is the same to-day as he was yesterday, and will continue the same forever. He does not reject the prayer of the poor and destitute, nor disregard the cry of the meanest negro. The blood of them spilt for these many years in your respective provinces will ascend up to heaven against you."

Some who have only seen negroes in an abject state of slavery, broken-spirited and dejected, knowing nothing of their situation in their native country, may apprehend that they are naturally insensible of the benefits of liberty, being destitute and miserable in every respect, and that our suffering them to live amongst us, (as the Gibeonites of old were permitted to live with the Israelites,) though even on more oppressive terms, is to them a favor; but these are certainly erroneous opinions with respect to far the greatest part of them, although it is highly probable that in a country which is more than three thousand

miles in extent from north to south, and as much from east to west, there will be barren parts, and many inhabitants more uncivilized and barbarous than others, as is the case in all other countries; yet, from the most authentic accounts, the inhabitants of Guinea appear, generally speaking, to be an industrious, humane, sociable people, whose capacities are naturally as enlarged and as open to improvement as those of the Europeans, and that their country is fruitful and in many places well improved, abounding in cattle, grain, and fruits; and, as the earth yields all the year round a fresh supply of food, and but little clothing is requisite, by reason of the continual warmth of the climate, the necessaries of life are much easier procured in most parts of Africa than in our more northern climes. This is confirmed by many authors of note who have resided there.

William Smith, who was sent by the African Company to visit the settlements on the coast of Guinea, in 1726, gives much the same account of the country of Delmina and Cape Corse, &c. for beauty and goodness, and adds, "The more you come downward toward that part called Slave-Coast, the more delightful and rich the soil appears." Speaking of their disposition, he says, "They were a civil, good-natured people, industrious to the last degree. It is easy to perceive what happy memories they are blessed with, and how great progress they would make in the sciences in case their genius was cultivated with

study." He adds, from the information he received of one of the factors who had resided ten years in that country, "*that the discerning natives account it their greatest unhappiness that they were ever visited by the Europeans; that the Christians introduced the traffic of slaves, and that before our coming they lived in peace.*"

From these accounts, both of the good disposition of the natives and the fruitfulness of most parts of Guinea, which are confirmed by many other authors, it may well be concluded that their acquaintance with the Europeans would have been a happiness to them had those last not only bore the name, but been influenced by the spirit, of Christianity. But, alas, how hath the conduct of the whites contradicted the precepts and example of Christ! Instead of promoting the end of his coming by preaching the gospel of peace and good-will to man, they have, by their practices, contributed to inflame every noxious passion of corrupt nature in the negroes; they have incited them to make war one upon another, and for this purpose have furnished them with prodigious quantities of ammunition and arms, whereby they have been hurried into confusion, bloodshed, and all the extremities of temporal misery, which must necessarily beget in their minds such a general detestation and scorn of the Christian name as may deeply affect, if not wholly preclude, their belief of the great truths of our holy religion. Thus an insatiable desire of gain hath become the principal and moving cause of the

most abominable and dreadful scene that was perhaps ever acted upon the face of the earth. Even the power of their kings hath been made subservient to answer this wicked purpose: instead of being protectors of their people, these rulers, allured by the tempting bait laid before them by the European factors, &c., have invaded the liberties of their unhappy subjects and are become their oppressors.

Those who are acquainted with the trade agree that many negroes on the sea-coast, who have been corrupted by their intercourse and converse with the European factors, have learned to stick at no act of cruelty for gain. These make it a practice to steal abundance of little blacks of both sexes, when found on the roads or in the fields, where their parents keep them all day to watch the corn, &c. Some authors say the negro factors go six or seven hundred miles up the country with goods bought from the Europeans, where markets of men are kept in the same manner as those of beasts with us. When the poor slaves, whether brought from far or near, come to the sea-shore, they are stripped naked and strictly examined by the European surgeons, both men and women, without the least distinction or modesty: those which are approved as good are marked with a redhot iron with the ship's mark, after which they are put on board the vessels, the men being shackled with irons, two and two together. Reader, bring the matter home, and consider whether any situation in life can be more completely misera-

ble than that of those distressed captives. When we reflect that each individual of this number had some tender attachment, which was broken by this cruel separation; some parent or wife, who had not an opportunity of mingling tears in a parting embrace; perhaps some infant, or aged parent, whom his labor was to feed and vigilance protect; themselves under the dreadful apprehension of an unknown, perpetual slavery, pent up within the narrow confines of a vessel, sometimes six or seven hundred together, where they lie as close as possible. Under these complicated distresses, they are often reduced to a state of desperation, wherein many have leaped into the sea and kept themselves under water till they were drowned; others have starved themselves to death, for the prevention whereof some masters of vessels have cut off the legs and arms of a number of those poor desperate creatures to terrify the rest. Great numbers have also frequently been killed, and some deliberately put to death under the greatest torture, when they have attempted to rise, in order to free themselves from their present misery and the slavery designed them.

When the vessels arrive at their destined port in the Colonies, the poor negroes are to be disposed of to the planters; and here they are again exposed, naked, without any distinction of sex, to the brutal examination of their purchasers; and this, as it may well be judged, is to many of them another occasion of deep distress, especially to the females; add to

this, that near connections must now again be separated, to go with their several purchasers.* In this melancholy scene, mothers are seen hanging over their daughters, bedewing their naked breasts with tears, and daughters clinging to their parents, not knowing what new stage of distress must follow their separation, or if ever they shall meet again; and here, what sympathy, what commiseration, are they to expect? Why, indeed, if they will not separate as readily as their owners think proper, the whipper is called for and the lash exercised upon their naked bodies till obliged to part.

Can any human heart that retains a fellow-feeling for the sufferings of mankind be unconcerned at relations of such grievous affliction, to which this oppressed part of our species are subjected? God gave to man dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowls of the air, and over the cattle, &c., but imposed no involuntary subjection of one man to another.

The truth of this position has of late been clearly set forth by persons of reputation and ability, particularly George Wallis, in his System of the Laws of Scotland, whose sentiments are so worthy the notice of all considerate persons that I shall here repeat a

* Precisely the same scenes may be witnessed, in our day, at the slave-auctions of the Southern States of the Union. The system of internal slave-trade tolerated by our laws is scarcely less revolting in its details than the evil we profess to have abolished.

part of what he has not long since published concerning the African trade,—viz.:

"If this trade admits of a moral or a rational justification, every crime, even the most atrocious, may be justified. Government was instituted for the good of mankind. Kings, princes, governors, are not proprietors of those who are subjected to their authority; they have not a right to make them miserable. On the contrary, their authority is vested in them that they may, by the just exercise of it, promote the happiness of their people. Of course they have not a right to dispose of their liberty and to sell them for slaves. Besides, no man has a right to acquire or to purchase them; men and their liberty are not either salable or purchasable: one, therefore, has nobody but himself to blame, in case he shall find himself deprived of a man whom he thought he had, by buying for a price, made his own; for he dealt in a trade which was illicit and was prohibited by the most obvious dictates of humanity. For these reasons, every one of those unfortunate men who are pretended to be slaves has a right to be declared to be free, for he never lost his liberty; he could not lose it; his prince has no power to dispose of him; of course the sale was void. This right he carries about with him, and is entitled everywhere to get it declared. As soon, therefore, as he comes into a country in which the judges are not forgetful of their own humanity, it is their duty to remember that he is a man and to declare him to be free.

This is the law of nature, which is obligatory on all men at all times and in all places. Would not any of us, who should be snatched by pirates from his native land, think himself cruelly abused, and at all times entitled to be free? Have not those unfortunate Africans, who meet with the same cruel fate, the same right? Are not they men as well as we, and have they not the same sensibility? Let us not, therefore, defend or support a usage which is contrary to all laws of humanity."

Francis Hutchinson also, in his System of Moral Philosophy, speaking on the subject of slavery, says, "He who detains another by force in slavery is always bound to prove his title. The slave sold or carried away into a distant country must not be obliged to prove a negative, that he never forfeited his liberty. The violent possessor must in all cases show his title, especially where the old proprietor is well known. In this case each man is the original proprietor of his own liberty. The proof of his losing it must be incumbent on those who deprived him of it by force. Strange (says the same author) that in any nation where a sense of liberty prevails, where the Christian religion is professed, custom and high prospect of gain can so stupefy the consciences of men, and all sense of natural justice, that they can hear such computation made about the value of their fellow-men and their liberty, without abhorrence and indignation!"

The noted Baron Montesquieu gives it as his

opinion, in his Spirit of Law, page 348, "That nothing more assimilates a man to a beast than living amongst freemen, himself a slave: such people as these are the natural enemies of society, and their number must always be dangerous."

The author of a pamphlet lately printed in London, entitled An Essay in Vindication of the Continental Colonies of America, writes, "That the bondage we have imposed on the Africans is absolutely repugnant to justice. That it is highly inconsistent with civil policy. First, as it tends to suppress all improvements in arts and sciences, without which it is morally impossible that any nation should be happy or powerful. Secondly, as it may deprave the minds of the freemen, steeling their hearts against the laudable feelings of virtue and humanity. And, lastly, as it endangers the community by the destructive effects of civil commotions. Need I add to these (says that author) what every heart which is not callous to all tender feelings will readily suggest, that it is shocking to humanity, violative of every generous sentiment, abhorrent utterly from the Christian religion?—for, as Montesquieu very justly observes, 'We must suppose them not to be men, or a suspicion would follow that we ourselves are not Christians.' There cannot be a more dangerous maxim than that necessity is a plea for injustice. For who shall fix the degree of this necessity? What villain so atrocious who may not urge this excuse, or, as Milton has happily expressed it,—

'And with necessity,
The tyrant's plea, excuse his devilish deed'?

That our colonies want people is a very weak argument for so inhuman a violation of justice. Shall a civilized, a Christian nation encourage slavery because the barbarous, savage, lawless African hath done it? Monstrous thought! To what end do we profess a religion whose dictates we so flagrantly violate? Wherefore have we that pattern of goodness and humanity if we refuse to follow it? How long shall we continue a practice which policy rejects, justice condemns, and piety dissuades? Shall the Americans persist in a conduct which cannot be justified, or persevere in oppression from which their hearts must recoil? If the barbarous Africans shall continue to enslave each other, let the demon slavery remain among them, that their crime may include its own punishment. Let not Christians, by administering to their wickedness, confess their religion to be a useless refinement, their profession vain, and themselves as inhuman as the savages they detest."

James Foster, in his Discourses on Natural Religion and Social Virtue, also shows his just indignation at this wicked practice, which he declares to be a criminal and outrageous violation of the natural right of mankind. At page 156, vol. ii., he says, "Should we have read, concerning the Greeks or Romans of old, that they traded with a view to make slaves of their own species, whom they certainly knew that

this would involve in schemes of blood and murder, of destroying or enslaving each other; that they even fomented wars, and engaged whole nations and tribes in open hostilities for their own private advantage; that they had no detestation of the violence and cruelty, but only feared the ill success, of their inhuman enterprises; that they carried men like themselves, their brethren, and the offspring of the same common parent, to be sold like beasts of prey or beasts of burden, and put them to the same reproachful trial of their soundness, strength, and capacity for greater bodily service; that, quite forgetting and renouncing the original dignity of human nature, communicated to all, they treated them with more severity and ruder discipline than even the ox or the ass, who are void of understanding: should we not, if this had been the case, have naturally been led to despise all their pretended refinements of morality, and to have concluded that, as they were not nations destitute of politeness, they must have been entire strangers to virtue and benevolence?

"But, notwithstanding this, we ourselves (who profess to be Christians, and boast of the peculiar advantages we enjoy by means of an express revelation of our duty from Heaven) are, in effect, these very untaught and rude heathen countries. With all our superior light, we instil into those whom we call savage and barbarous the most despicable opinion of human nature. We, to the utmost of our power, weaken and dissolve the universal tie that binds and unites

mankind. We practise what we should exclaim against, as the utmost excess of cruelty and tyranny, if nations of the world, differing in color and form of government from ourselves, were so possessed of empire as to be able to reduce us to a state of unmerited and brutish servitude. Of consequence, we sacrifice our reason, our humanity, our Christianity, to an unnatural, sordid gain. We teach other nations to despise and trample under foot all the obligations of social virtue. We take the most effectual method to prevent the propagation of the gospel, by representing it as a scheme of power and barbarous oppression, and an enemy to the natural privileges and rights of men.

"Perhaps all that I have now offered may be of very little weight to restrain this enormity, this aggravated iniquity. However, I shall still have the satisfaction of having entered my private protest against a practice which, in my opinion, bids that God, who is the God and Father of the Gentiles unconverted to Christianity, most daring and bold defiance, and spurns at all the principles both of natural and revealed religion."

How the British nation first came to be concerned in a practice by which the rights and liberties of mankind are so violently infringed, and which is so opposite to the apprehensions Englishmen have always had of what natural justice requires, is indeed surprising. It was about the year 1563, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, that the English first engaged

in the Guinea trade; when it appears, from an account in Hill's Naval History, page 293, that when Captain Hawkins returned from his first voyage to Africa, that generous-spirited princess, attentive to the interest of her subjects, sent for the commander, to whom she expressed her concern lest any of the African negroes should be carried off without their free consent, declaring it would be detestable, and call down the vengeance of Heaven upon the undertakers. Captain Hawkins promised to comply with the Queen's injunction: nevertheless, we find in the account given in the same history of Hawkins's second voyage, the author using these remarkable words, *Here began the horrid practice of forcing the Africans into slavery.*

Labat, a Roman missionary, in his account of the Isles of America, at page 114 of vol. iv., mentions, that Louis XII., father to the present French king's grandfather, was extremely uneasy at a law by which all the negroes of his colonies were to be made slaves; but, it being strongly urged to him as the readiest means for their conversion to Christianity, he acquiesced therewith.

And, although we have not many accounts of the impressions which this piratical invasion of the rights of mankind gave to serious-minded people when first engaged in, yet it did not escape the notice of some who might be esteemed in a peculiar manner as watchmen, in their day, to the different societies of Christians whereunto they belonged. Richard Baxter, an

eminent preacher amongst the non-conformists in the last century, well known and particularly esteemed by most of the serious Presbyterians and Independents, in his Christian Directory, mostly wrote about a hundred years ago, fully shows his detestation of this practice in the following words:—"Do you not mark how God hath followed you with plagues, and may not conscience tell you that it is for your inhumanity to the souls and bodies of men? To go as pirates and catch up poor negroes or people of another land, that never forfeited life nor liberty, and to make them slaves and sell them, is one of the worst kinds of thievery in the world; and such persons are to be taken for the common enemies of mankind; and they that buy them and use them as beasts for their mere commodity, and betray, or destroy, or neglect their souls, are fitter to be called devils than Christians. It is a heinous sin to buy them, unless it be in charity to deliver them. Undoubtedly they are presently bound to deliver them, because, by right, the man is his own: therefore, no man else can have a just title to him."

We also find George Fox, a man of exemplary piety, who was the principal instrument in gathering the religious society of people called Quakers, expressing his concern and fellow-feeling for the bondage of the negroes, in a discourse taken from his mouth, in Barbadoes, in the year 1671. He says, "Consider with yourselves if you were in the same condition as the blacks are, who came strangers to

you and were sold to you as slaves; I say, if this should be the condition of you or yours, you would think it hard measure, yea, and very great bondage and cruelty. And therefore consider seriously of this, and do you for and to them as you would willingly have them or any other to do unto you were you in the like slavish condition, and bring them to know the Lord Christ."

Do we indeed believe the truths declared in the gospel? Are we persuaded that the threatenings as well as the promises therein contained will have their accomplishment? If indeed we do, must we not tremble to think what a load of guilt lies upon our nation generally and individually, so far as we in any degree abet or countenance this aggravated iniquity?

I shall now conclude with an extract from an address of a late author to the merchants and others who are concerned in carrying on the Guinea trade, which also in a great measure is applicable to others, who, for the love of gain, are in any way concerned in promoting or maintaining the captivity of the negroes:—

"As the business you are publicly carrying on before the world has a bad aspect, and you are sensible most men make objections against it, you ought to justify it to the world upon principles of reason, equity, and humanity, to make it appear that it is no unjust invasion of the persons, or encroachments on the rights of men, or forever to lay it aside. But

aying aside the resentment of men, which is but of ittle or no moment in comparison with that of the Almighty, think of a future reckoning; consider ıow you shall come off in the great and awful day of account: you now heap up riches, and live in pleasure, but, oh, what will you do in the end hereof? and that is not far off. What if death hould seize upon you and hurry you out of this vorld under all that load of blood-guiltiness that now ies upon your souls? The gospel expressly declares hat thieves and murderers shall not inherit the ingdom of God. Consider that at the same time ınd by the same means you now treasure up worldly iches you are treasuring up to yourselves wrath gainst the day of wrath, and vengeance that shall ome upon the workers of iniquity, unless prevented y a timely repentance.

"And what greater iniquity, what crime that is more heinous, that carries in it more complicated guilt, can you name, than that in the habitual, deliberate practice of which you now live? How can you lift up your guilty eyes to heaven? How can you pray for mercy to Him that made you, or hope for any favor from Him that formed you, while you go on thus grossly and openly to dishonor him in debasing and destroying the noblest workmanship of his hands in this lower world? He is the Father of men; and do you think he will not resent such treatment of his offspring whom he hath so loved as to give his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might

not perish, but have everlasting life? This love of God to man, revealed in the gospel, is a great aggravation of your guilt; for if God so loved us we ought also to love one another. You remember the fate of the servant who took hold of his fellow-servant, who was in his debt, by the throat and cast him into prison: think, then, and tremble to think, what will be your fate, who take your fellow-servants by the throat, that owe you not a penny, and make them prisoners for life.

"Give yourselves leave to reflect impartially upon and consider the nature of this man-trade, which if you do, your hearts must needs relent, if you have not lost all sense of humanity, all pity and compassion towards those of your own kind, to think what calamities, what havoc and destruction among them, you have been the authors of, for filthy lucre's sake. God grant you may be sensible of your guilt and repent in time!"

A SHORT ACCOUNT

OF THAT PART OF

AFRICA INHABITED BY THE NEGROES, &c.

BY ANTHONY BENEZET.

It is a truth, as sorrowful as obvious, that mankind too generally are actuated by false motives, and substitute an imaginary interest in the room of that which is real and permanent. And it must be acknowledged, by every man who is sincerely desirous of becoming acquainted with himself and impartially inspects his own heart, that weakness and inbred corruption attend human nature, which cannot be restored to its original purity but through the efficacy of the blood of Jesus Christ, our blessed Saviour. So that, notwithstanding the imagined moral rectitude pleaded for, and the boasted pretences of the present age to refined conceptions of things beyond our forefathers, till this divine help is embraced, the heart of man will remain corrupt, and its power of distinguishing between good and evil will still be obscured by prejudice, passion, and interest. Covetousness and pride have introduced many iniquitous practices into civil society, which, though odious in themselves and most pernicious in their consequences, yet, being calculated to gratify our favorite passions, have been adopted through custom and forced so strongly by example as to become familiar to us, so that by degrees

we silence the dictates of conscience and reconcile ourselves to such things as would, when first proposed to our unprejudiced minds, have struck us with amazement and horror.

A lamentable and shocking instance of the influence which the love of gain has upon the minds of those who yield to its allurements, even when contrary to the dictates of reason and the common feelings of humanity, appears in the prosecution of the negro-trade, in which the English nation has long been deeply concerned and some in this province have lately engaged,—an evil of so deep a dye and attended with such dreadful consequences, that no well-disposed person, (anxious for the welfare of himself, his country, or posterity,) who knows the tyranny, oppression, and cruelty with which this iniquitous trade is carried on, can be a silent and innocent spectator. How many thousands of our harmless fellow-creatures have, for a long course of years, fallen a sacrifice to that selfish avarice which gives life to this complicated wickedness! The iniquity of being engaged in a trade by which so great a number of innocent people are yearly destroyed in an untimely and miserable manner, is greatly aggravated from the consideration that we, as a people, have been peculiarly favored with the light of the gospel, that revelation of divine love which the angels introduced to the world by a declaration of peace on earth and good-will to men, of every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. How miserable must be our condition

if, for filthy lucre, we should continue to act so contrary to the nature of this divine call, the purpose of which is to introduce a universal and affectionate brotherhood in the whole human species, by removing, from the heart of every individual who submits to its operation, the darkness and corruption of nature, and transforming the selfish, wrathful, proud spirit into meekness, purity, and love: for this end the Son of God became man, suffered, and died, and the whole tenor of the gospel declares, that for those who refuse or neglect the offers of this great salvation, the Son of God has suffered in vain.

The end proposed by this essay is to lay before the candid reader the depth of evil attending this iniquitous practice, in the prosecution of which, our duty to God, the common Father of the family of the whole earth, and our duty of love to our fellow-creatures, is totally disregarded; all social connection and tender ties of nature being broken, desolation and bloodshed continually fomented in those unhappy people's country. It is also intended to invalidate the false arguments which are frequently advanced for the palliation of this trade, in hopes it may be some inducement to those who are not defiled therewith to keep themselves clear; and to lay before such as have unwarily engaged in it, their danger of totally losing that tender sensibility to the sufferings of their fellow-creatures, the want whereof sets men beneath the brute creation; a trade by which many thousands of innocent people are brought under the greatest

anxiety and sufferings, by being violently rent from their native country in the most cruel manner, and brought to our colonies to be employed in hard labor in climates unsuited to their nature, or in a state of the most abject and barbarous slavery, subject to the humors and inhuman lash of some of the most hard-hearted and inconsiderate of mankind, without any hopes of ever returning to their native land, or seeing an end to their misery; nor must we omit, in this dismal account, the weight of blood which lies on the promoters of this trade, from the great numbers that are yearly butchered in the incursions and battles which happen between the negroes in order to procure the number delivered to the Europeans, and the many of these poor creatures whose hearts are broken, and they perish through misery and grief, on the passage. May the Almighty preserve the inhabitants of Pennsylvania from being further defiled by a trade which is entered upon from such sensual motives and carried on by such devilish means!

Persons whose minds are engrossed by the pleasures and profits of this life are generally so taken up with present objects that they are but little affected with the distant sufferings of their fellow-creatures, especially when their wealth is thereby increased. Nevertheless, every one who is in any respect concerned in this wicked traffic, if not so hardened by the love of wealth as to be void of feeling, must, upon a serious recollection, be impressed with sur-

prise and terror, from a sense that there is a righteous God, and a state of retribution which will last forever. It is frequently alleged, in excuse for this trade, that the negroes sold in our plantations are mostly persons who have been taken prisoners in those wars which arise among themselves from their mutual animosities, and that these prisoners would be sacrificed to the resentment of those who have taken them captive, if they were not purchased and brought away by the Europeans. It is also represented that the negroes are generally a stupid, savage people, whose situation in their own country is necessitous and unhappy, which has induced many to believe that the bringing them from their native land is rather a kindness than an injury.

To confute these false representations, the following extracts are proposed to the candid reader's consideration: they are taken from the writings of the principal officers, not only in the English, but in the French and Dutch factories or settlements in Guinea, some of whom have lived many years in those countries, and have been eye-witnesses to the transactions they relate. By which it will appear that the negroes are generally a sensible, humane, and sociable people, and that their capacity is as good and as capable of improvement as that of the whites. That their country, though unfriendly to the Europeans, yet appears peculiarly agreeable and well adapted to the nature of the blacks, and so fruitful as to furnish its inhabitants plentifully with the

necessaries of life with much less labor than in our more northern climates.

And, as to the common argument alleged in defence of the trade,—viz.: that the slaves sold to the Europeans are captives taken in war, who would be destroyed by their conquerors if not thus purchased, it is without foundation: for, although there were doubtless wars among the negroes before the Europeans began to trade with them, yet certain it is that since that time those calamities have prodigiously increased, which is principally owing to the solicitations of the white people, who have instigated the poor Africans by every method, even the most iniquitous and cruel, to procure slaves to load their vessels, which they freely and gladly purchase, without any regard to the precepts of the gospel, the feelings of humanity, or the common dictates of reason and equity.

This plainly appears from the account given by Andrew Brue, General Director of the French factory at Senegal, who travelled much on and about the two great rivers of Senegal and Gambia. In Astley's Collection of Voyages, he is spoken of as a person of judgment, and one who had had sufficient opportunities, by his long residence there, of gaining a thorough knowledge of the manners, customs, and dispositions of the people inhabiting the country for about four hundred miles along the coast extending on each side the before-mentioned rivers. Speaking of the Papel negroes, (among whom he was then en-

deavoring to erect a factory,) he says, "They are at continual wars with their neighbors, whom they invade as often as they think it for their advantage. . . . . These wars of theirs are never long. Generally speaking, they are incursions or expeditions of five or six days." He adds,—

"The Europeans are far from desiring to act as peace-makers among them, (*i.e.* the negroes,) which would be contrary to their interest, since the greater the wars are, the more slaves."

And now, reader, if, from the example of others, and without a sufficient knowledge of the deplorable consequences attendant on this trade, thou hast inadvertently engaged therein, let me beseech thee, by the mercies of Christ Jesus our Lord, (those mercies which, perhaps, ere long, thou and I shall desire to fly to as our only refuge,) that thou wouldst refrain a practice so inconsistent with thy duty both as a Christian and a man. Remember, the first and chief commandment is, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart. And that the second, like unto it, is, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. That our blessed Redeemer has enjoined us to do unto others as we would they should do unto us, and that it will be those who have been righteous and merciful to their fellow-creatures that will be entitled to the mercy of the Great Judge of heaven and earth, before whom we must all appear to give an account of the deeds done in the body.

And, as for those who confess themselves now

convinced of the iniquity and injustice of buying and selling their fellow-creatures, and yet continue to keep those negroes they are possessed of in bondage, for the sake of the profit arising from their labor, it behooves them seriously to consider their motives for such a conduct, whether the distinction they make between buying a negro and keeping the same negro or his offspring in perpetual bondage is not a plea founded more in words than supported by truth; for it must be obvious, to every person who is not blinded by the desire of gain, that the right by which these men hold the negroes in bondage is no other than what is derived from those who stole them, who, having no other title but that which robbers have over their prey, could not convey any better to the purchaser; and that, therefore, to continue to hold them in bondage for worldly advantage, by no other right than that which those guilty men give them, is consenting to and partaking of their guilt. Instances may fall out where men of candor may be concerned in the purchase of negroes purely from a principle of charity; and there are also many of the blacks among us whose dispositions, infirmities, or age makes it necessary they should be under care; but, in the case before mentioned, where persons declared themselves convinced of the injustice and iniquity of this trade, and are possessed of negroes who are capable of managing for themselves, and have sufficiently paid, by their labor, for their purchase or bringing up, besides the profit some families

have reaped, during a long course of years, from the labor of their progenitors, it is the undoubted duty of their possessors to restore them their liberty, and also to use all reasonable endeavors to enable them to procure a comfortable living, not only as an act of justice to the individuals, but as a debt due on account of the oppression and injustice perpetrated on them or their ancestors, and as the best means to avert the judgments of God, which it is to be feared will fall on families and countries in proportion as they have, more or less, defiled themselves with this iniquitous traffic.

Doubts may arise in the minds of some, whether the foregoing account relating to the natural capacity and good disposition of many of the inhabitants of Guinea, and of the violent manner in which they appear to be torn from their native land, is sufficiently founded on truth, as the negroes who are brought to us are seldom heard to complain, and do not manifest that docility and quickness of parts which might be expected from this account. Persons who may make such objections are desired impartially to consider whether this is not owing to the many discouragements these poor Africans labor under, though in an enlightened Christian country, and the little opportunity they have of exerting and improving their natural talents. They are constantly employed in servile labor; and the abject condition in which we see them from our childhood has a natural tendency to create in us an idea of a superiority, and induces

many to look upon them as an ignorant and contemptible part of mankind. Add to this, that they have but little opportunity of freely conversing with such of the whites as might impart instruction to them, the endeavoring of which would, indeed, by most be accounted folly, if not presumption. A fondness for wealth, or for gaining esteem and honor, is what prompts most men to the desire of excelling others; but these motives for the exertion and improvement of their faculties can have but little or no influence upon the minds of the negroes, few of them having hopes of attaining to any condition beyond that of slavery; so that though the natural capacity of many of them be ever so good, yet they have no inducement or opportunity of exerting it to any advantage, which naturally tends to depress their minds and sink their spirits into habits of idleness and sloth, which they would, in all likelihood, have been free from had they stood upon an equal footing with the white people. Nevertheless, it may with truth be said, that among those who have obtained their freedom, as well as those who remain in servitude, some have manifested as much sagacity and uprightness of heart as could have been expected from the whites under the like circumstances; and, if all the free negroes have not done the same, is it a matter of surprise? Have we not reason to make complaint with respect to many of our white servants, when from under our care?—though most of them have had much greater advantages than the blacks, who, even

when free, still labor under the difficulties before mentioned, having but little access to, and intercourse with, the white people; they yet remained confined within the former limits of conversation with those of their own color, and consequently have but little more opportunity of knowledge and improvement than when in slavery.

And, if they seldom complain of the unjust and cruel usage they have received in being forced from their native country, &c., it is not to be wondered at; as it is a considerable time after their arrival among us before they can speak our language, and, by the time they are able to express themselves, they cannot but observe, from the behavior of the whites, that little or no notice would be taken of their complaints. Yet let any person inquire of those who had attained the age of reason before they were brought from their native land, and he shall hear such relations as, if not lost to the common feelings of humanity, will sensibly affect his heart. The case of a poor negro, not long since brought from Guinea, is a recent instance of this kind. From his first arrival he appeared thoughtful and dejected, the cause of which was not known till he was able to speak English, when the account he gave of himself was, that he had a wife and children in his own country; that, some of them being sick and thirsty, he went in the night-time to fetch water at a spring, where he was violently seized and carried away by some persons who lay in wait to catch men, whence he was transported to

America; the remembrance of his family, friends, and other connections left behind, which he never expected to see any more, were the principal causes of his dejection and grief. Can any compassionate heart hear this relation without being affected with sympathy and sorrow? And doubtless the case of many of these unhappy people would, upon inquiry, appear attended with circumstances equally tragical and aggravating. Now, you that have studied the book of conscience, and those that are learned in the law, what will you say to this deplorable case? When and how has this man forfeited his liberty? Does not justice loudly call for its being restored to him? Has he not the same right to demand it as any of us should have if we had been violently snatched by pirates from our native land? Where instances of this kind frequently occur, and are neither inquired into nor redressed by those whose duty it is to seek judgment and relieve the oppressed, what can be expected but that the groans and cries of these sufferers will reach heaven? and what shall you do when God riseth up? and when he visiteth, what shall you answer him?

It is scarce to be doubted but that the foregoing accounts will beget in the heart of every considerate reader an earnest desire to see a stop put to this complicated evil; but the objection with many is, What shall be done with those negroes already imported and born in our families? Must they be sent to Africa? There are objections which weigh with

many well-disposed people; and, indeed, it must be granted there are difficulties in the way, nor can any general change be made, or reformation effected, without some: but the difficulties are not so great but that they may be surmounted. If the government was so sensible of the iniquity and danger attendant on this practice, as to be willing to seek a remedy, doubtless the Almighty would bless this good intention, and such methods would be thought of as would not only put an end to the unjust oppression of the negroes, but might bring them under such regulations as would enable them to become profitable members of society.

Upon the whole of what has been said, it must appear to every honest, unprejudiced reader that the negroes are equally entitled to the common privileges of mankind with the whites; that they have the same rational powers, the same natural affections, and are as susceptible of pain and grief as they; that, therefore, the bringing and keeping them in bondage is an instance of oppression and injustice of the most grievous nature, such as is scarcely to be paralleled by any example in the present or former ages. Many of its woful effects have already been expressed, but those which more particularly call for the notice and redress of the government arise from its inconsistency with every thing that is just and humane, whence the worst effects naturally flow to the religion and morals of the people where it prevails. Its destructive consequences to laboring people and trades-

men are no less worthy the attention of those who have inclination and power to serve their country. This rank of people, as they are the chief strength and support of a community, so their situation and welfare call for the particular care of every prudent government; but, where slave-keeping prevails, their places and services being supplied by the negroes, they find themselves slighted, disregarded, and robbed of the natural opportunities of labor common in other countries, whereby they are much discouraged and their families often reduced to want; to which may be added the discouragement also given by this trade to many poor people that can scarce get bread in our mother-country, who, if not prevented on account of the great number of negroes, would be likely to come over into the colonies, where they might with ease procure to themselves a more comfortable living than at home. Another direful effect arises from the fearful apprehensions and terrors which often seize the minds of the people, for the suppression of which the most cruel methods are pursued, such as are indeed a reproach to Christianity, and will by degrees harden the hearts of those who are active therein, so as totally to exclude them from that tenderness and sympathy for the sufferings of their fellow-creatures which constitutes the happiness of society and is the glory of intelligent beings. As for the possessors of the negroes themselves, though the sumptuousness and ease in which they live, and the attendance and obsequiousness of their slaves

may raise in their minds an imagined apprehension of their being persons more happy and of greater importance than other people, who do not live in the like affluence and state, yet happy would it be if they were sensible how great is their mistake, and could be persuaded seriously to consider and apply the parable of the rich man and poor Lazarus mentioned by our Saviour, whereby they might plainly perceive that they have no cause to exult, because of their power and plenty, but have rather occasion to mourn over themselves, their children, and their country; the natural effect of their situation being such, as has been repeatedly observed, "To fill men with haughtiness, tyranny, luxury, and barbarity; corrupting the minds and debasing the morals of their children, to the unspeakable prejudice of religion and virtue, and the exclusion of that holy spirit of universal love, meekness, and charity which is the unchangeable nature and glory of true Christianity."

THOUGHTS

UPON

SLAVERY,

BY

JOHN WESLEY, A.M.

"AND THE LORD SAID—WHAT HAST THOU DONE? THE VOICE OF THY BROTHER'S BLOOD CRIETH UNTO ME FROM THE GROUND."—GEN. chap. iv.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE author of the following pages needs no introduction or commendation to the intelligent reader.

As the founder of a great church polity, his authority is universally acknowledged within that religious community, and generally respected over the Christian world.

More especially is this the case in some of the Southern States of our Union, where the Methodist societies embrace, perhaps, within their borders, the most numerous and influential congregations of any Church organization. Yet, while many of the religious opinions of John Wesley are still cherished there in all their vitality and authority, it is believed that his views on the great question of Slavery are not fully appreciated, if even they are generally known.

The abridgment now presented of his essay on this important subject may therefore prove instructive and

suggestive to the candid inquirer, whatever his religious or political opinions may be.

The portions of the treatise omitted, relate chiefly to the horrors of the African slave-trade; it seeming hardly necessary to republish them at this day, when, by the universal consent of Christendom, that infamous pursuit is outlawed and punished as piracy on the high seas. Such parts, however, have been retained as appear equally to apply to that great system of internal traffic in human beings, still prevailing so extensively throughout the Southern States of our Union, and which may be regarded as the darkest feature of American Slavery.

THOUGHTS UPON SLAVERY.

I. By *Slavery* I mean domestic slavery, or that of a servant to a master. A late ingenious writer well observes, "The variety of forms in which slavery appears, makes it almost impossible to convey a just notion of it by way of definition. There are however certain properties which have accompanied slavery in most places, whereby it is easily distinguished from that mild domestic *service* which obtains in our own country."*

2. Slavery imports an obligation of perpetual service, an obligation which only the consent of the master can dissolve. Neither, in some countries, can the master himself dissolve it without the consent of judges appointed by law. It generally gives the master an arbitrary power of any correction not affecting life or limb. Sometimes even these are exposed to his will, or protected only by a fine or some slight punishment, too inconsiderable to restrain a master of a harsh temper. It creates an

incapacity of acquiring any thing, except for master's benefit. It allows the master to alie the slave in the same manner as his cows horses. Lastly, it descends in its full extent parent to child, even to the latest generation.

3. The beginning of this may be dated from remotest period of which we have an accoun history. It commenced in the barbarous stat society, and in process of time spread into all nat It prevailed particularly among the Jews, Greeks, the Romans, and the ancient Germans; was transmitted by them to the various kingc and states which arose out of the ruins of Roman empire. But after Christianity prevaile gradually fell into decline in almost all part Europe. This great change began in Spain, a the end of the eighth century, and was bec general in most other kingdoms of Europe before middle of the fourteenth.

4. From this time slavery was nearly extinct the commencement of the sixteenth century, v the discovery of America and of the western eastern coasts of Africa gave occasion to the vival of it. It took its rise from the Portug who, to supply the Spaniards with men to culti their new possessions in America, procured neg from Africa, whom they sold for slaves to the A rican Spaniards. This began in the year 1 when they imported the first negroes into paniola. In 1540, Charles the Fifth, then I

of Spain, determined to put an end to negro-slavery, —giving positive orders that all the negro slaves in the Spanish dominions should be set free. And this was accordingly done by Lagasca, whom he sent and empowered to free them all, on condition of continuing to labor for their masters. But soon after Lagasca returned to Spain slavery returned and flourished as before. Afterwards other nations, as they acquired possessions in America, followed the examples of the Spaniards, and slavery has now taken deep root in most of our American colonies.

II. Such is the nature of slavery; such the beginning of negro-slavery in America. But some may desire to know what kind of a country it is from which the negroes are brought; what sort of men, of what temper and behavior are they in their own country; and in what manner they are generally procured, carried to, and treated in America?

1. And, first: What kind of country is that from whence they are brought? Is it so remarkably horrid, dreary, and barren that it is a kindness to deliver them out of it? I believe many have apprehended so. But it is an entire mistake, if we may give credit to those who have lived many years therein, and could have no motive to misrepresent it.

2. That part of Africa whence the negroes are

brought, commonly known by the name of Guinea, extends along the coast, in the whole, between three and four thousand miles. From the river Senegal (seventeen degrees north of the line) to Cape Sierra Leona it contains seven hundred miles. Thence it runs eastward about fifteen hundred miles, including the Grain Coast, the Ivory Coast, the Gold Coast, and the Slave Coast, with the large kingdom of Benin. From thence it runs southward about twelve hundred miles, and contains the kingdoms of Congo and Angola.

3. Concerning the first, the Senegal Coast, Mons. Brue, who lived there sixteen years, after describing its fruitfulness near the sea, says, "The farther you go from the sea the more fruitful and well-improved is the country, abounding in pulse, Indian corn, and various fruits. Here are vast meadows, which feed large herds of great and small cattle; and the villages, which lie thick, show the country is well peopled." And again: "I was surprised to see the land so well cultivated: scarce a spot lay unimproved; the lowlands, divided by small canals, were all sowed with rice; the higher grounds were planted with Indian corn, and peas of different sorts. Their beef is excellent; poultry plenty and very cheap, as are all the necessaries of life."

4. As to the Grain and Ivory Coast, we learn, from eye-witnesses, that the soil is in general fertile, producing abundance of rice and roots. Indigo and cotton thrive without cultivation. Fish is in great

plenty; the flocks and herds are numerous, and the trees loaded with fruit.

5. The Gold Coast and Slave Coast, all who have seen it agree, is exceeding fruitful and pleasant, producing vast quantities of rice and other grain, plenty of fruit and roots, palm wine and oil, and fish in great abundance, with much tame and wild cattle. The very same account is given us of the soil and produce of the kingdoms of Benin, Congo, and Angola, from all which it appears that Guinea in general, far from being a horrid, dreary, barren country, is one of the most fruitful as well as the most pleasant countries in the known world. It is said indeed to be unhealthy; and so it is to strangers, but perfectly healthy to the native inhabitants.

6. Such is the country from which the negroes are brought. We come next to inquire what sort of men they are, of what temper and behavior, not in our plantations, but in their native country. And here, likewise, the surest way is to take our account from eye and ear witnesses. Now, those who have lived in the Senegal country observe it is inhabited by three nations, the Jaloss, Fulis, and Mandingos. The king of the Jaloss has under him several ministers, who assist in the exercise of justice. The chief justice goes in circuit through all his dominions, to hear complaints and determine controversies; and the viceroy goes with him, to inspect the behavior of the alkadi, or governor of each village. The Fulis are a numerous people; the soil of their

country represented as rich, affording large harvests, and the people laborious and good farmers. Of some of these Fuli blacks, who dwelt on the river Gambia, William Moore, the English factor, gives a very favorable account. He says they are governed by their chief men, who rule with much moderation. Few of them will drink any thing stronger than water, being stri[illegible] The government is easy, because th[illegible] a good and quiet disposition, and so [illegible] in what is right, that a man who wror[illegible] e abomination of all. They desire no [illegible] they use, which they cultivate with [illegible] ndustry. If any of them are known [illegible] es by the white men, they all join to r[illegible] hey not only support all that are old, or blind, or lame, among themselves, but have frequently supplied the necessities of the Mandingos when they were distressed by famine.

7. The Mandingos, says Mons. Brue, are rigid Mahometans, drinking neither wine nor brandy. They are industrious and laborious, keeping their ground well cultivated, and breeding a good flock of cattle. Every town has a governor, and he appoints the labor of the people. The men work the ground designed for corn, the women and girls the rice-ground; he afterwards divides the corn and rice among them, and decides all quarrels, if any arise. All the Mahometan negroes constantly go to public prayers thrice a day, there being a priest in every who regularly calls them together. Some

authors say it is surprising to see the attention and reverence which they observe during their worship. These three nations practise several trades: they have smiths, saddlers, potters, and weavers, and they are very ingenious at their several occupations; their smiths not only make all the instruments of iron which they have occasion to use, but likewise work many things neatly in gold and silver. It is chiefly the women and children who weave fine cotton cloth, which they dye blue and black.

8. It was of these parts of Guinea that Mons. Adanson, correspondent of the Royal Academy of Sciences at Paris from 1749 to 1753, gives the following account both as to the country and people:— "Which way soever I turned my eyes, I beheld a perfect image of pure nature: an agreeable solitude, bounded on every side by a charming landscape; the rural situation of cottages in the midst of trees, the ease and quietness of the negroes reclined under the shade of the spreading foliage, with the simplicity of their dress and manners,—the whole revived in my mind the idea of our first parents, and I seemed to contemplate the world in its primitive state. They are, generally speaking, very good-natured, sociable, and obliging. I was not a little pleased with my very first reception, and it fully convinced me that there ought to be a considerable abatement made in the accounts we have of the savage character of the Africans." He adds, "It is amazing that an illiterate people should reason so pertinently concerning the

heavenly bodies. There is no doubt but that, with proper instruments, they would become excellent astronomers."

9. The inhabitants of the Grain and Ivory Coast are represented by those that deal with them as sensible, courteous, and the fairest traders on the coasts of Guinea. They rarely drink to excess; if any do, they are severely punished, by the king's order. They are seldom troubled with war: if a difference happen between two nations, they commonly end the dispute amicably.

The inhabitants of the Gold and Slave Coast, likewise, when they are not artfully incensed against each other, live in great unity and friendship, being generally well-tempered, civil, tractable, and ready to help any that need it. In particular, the natives of the kingdom of Whidah are civil, kind, and obliging to strangers; and they are the most gentlemanlike of all the negroes, abounding in good manners toward each other. The inferiors pay great respect to their superiors: so wives to their husbands, children to their parents. And they are remarkably industrious; all are constantly employed, the men in agriculture, the women in spinning and weaving cotton.

10. The Gold and Slave Coasts are divided into several districts, some governed by kings, others by the principal men, who take care each of their own town or village, and prevent or appease tumults. They punish murder and adultery severely, very

quently with death. Theft and robbery are punished by a fine proportionable to the goods that were taken. All the natives of this coast, though heathens, believe there is one God, the Author of them and all things. They appear likewise to have a confused apprehension of a future state; and accordingly every town and village has a place of public worship. It is remarkable that they have no beggars among them, such is the care of the chief men in every city and village to provide some easy labor even for the old and weak. Some are employed in blowing the smiths' bellows, others in pressing palm-oil, others in grinding of colors. If they are too weak even for this, they sell provisions in the market.

11. The accounts we have of the natives of the kingdom of Benin is, that they are a reasonable and good-natured people, sincere and inoffensive, and do no injustice either to one another or to strangers. They are civil and courteous. If you make them a present, they endeavor to repay it double. And if they are trusted till the ship returns next year, they are sure honestly to pay the whole debt. Theft is punished among them, although not with the same severity as murder. If a man and woman of any quality are taken in adultery, they are certain to be put to death, and their bodies thrown on a dunghill and left a prey to wild beasts. They are punctually just and honest in their dealings, and are also very charitable,—the king and the great lords taking care to employ all that are capable of any work; and

those that are utterly helpless they keep for God's sake: so that here also are no beggars. The inhabitants of Congo and Angola are generally a quiet people. They discover a good understanding, and behave in a friendly manner to strangers, being of a mild temper and an affable carriage. Upon the whole, therefore, the negroes who inhabit the coast of Africa, from the river Senegal to the southern bounds of Angola, are so far from being the stupid, senseless, brutish, lazy barbarians, the fierce, cruel, perfidious savages they have been described, that, on the contrary, they are represented, by them who had no motive to flatter them, as remarkably sensible, considering the few advantages they have for improving their understanding; as very industrious, perhaps more so than any other natives of so warm a climate; as fair, just, and honest in their dealings, unless where white men have taught them to be otherwise; and as far more mild, friendly, and kind to strangers than any of our forefathers were. Our forefathers! Where shall we find at this day, among the fair-faced natives of Europe, a nation generally practising the justice, mercy, and truth which are related of these poor black Africans? Suppose the preceding accounts are true, (which I see no reason or pretence to doubt of,) and we may leave England and France to seek genuine honesty in Benin, Congo, or Angola.

III. We have now seen what kind of country it is

from which the negroes are brought, and what sort of men (even white men being the judges) they were in their own country. Inquire we, thirdly, in what manner are they generally procured, carried to, and treated in America?

1. First, in what manner are they procured? Part of them by fraud. Captains of ships from time to time have invited negroes to come on board, and then carried them away. But far more have been procured by force. The Christians landing upon their coasts seized as many as they found, men, women, and children, and transported them to America. It was about 1551 that the English began trading to Guinea, at first for gold and elephants' teeth, but soon after for men. In 1566, Sir John Hawkins sailed with two ships to Cape Verd, where he sent eighty men on shore to catch negroes; but, the natives flying, they fell farther down, and there set the men on shore "to burn their towns and take the inhabitants." But they met with such resistance that they had seven men killed, and took but ten negroes. So they went still farther down, till, having taken enough, they proceeded to the West Indies and sold them.

2. It was some time before the Europeans found a more compendious way of procuring African slaves, by prevailing upon them to make war upon each other and to sell their prisoners. Till then they seldom had any wars, but were in general quiet and peaceable; but the white men first taught them

drunkenness and avarice, and then hired them to sell one another. Nay, by this means even their kings are induced to sell their own subjects: so Mr. Moore, factor of the African Company in 1730, informs us:—"When the king of Barsalli wants goods or brandy, he sends to the English governor at James' Fort, who immediately sends a sloop. Against the time it arrives he plunders some of his neighbors' towns, selling the people for the goods he wants. At other times he falls upon one of his own towns, and makes bold to sell his own subjects." So Mons. Brue says:—"I wrote to the king (not the same) if he had a sufficient number of slaves I would treat with him. He seized three hundred of his own people, and sent word he was ready to deliver them for the goods." He adds, "Some of the natives are always ready, when well paid, to surprise and carry off their own countrymen. They come at night without noise, and, if they find any lone cottage, surround it and carry off all the people." Barbot, another French factor, says, "Many of the slaves sold by the negroes are prisoners of war, or taken in the incursions they make into their enemy's territories; others are stolen. Abundance of little blacks of both sexes are stolen away by their neighbors when found abroad on the road or in the woods, or else in the corn-fields, at the time of year when their parents keep them there all day to scare away the devouring birds." That their own parents sell them is utterly false.

3. To set the manner wherein negroes are procured in a yet stronger light, it will suffice to give an extract of two voyages to Guinea on this account. The first is taken verbatim from the original manuscript of the surgeon's journal:—

"SESTRO, Dec. 29, 1724.—No trade to-day, though many traders come on board. They informed us that the people are gone to war within-land, and will bring prisoners enough in two or three days, in hopes of which we stay.

"The 30th.—No trade yet, but our traders came on board to-day and informed us the people had burnt four towns; so that to-morrow we expect slaves off.

"The 31st.—Fair weather, but no trading yet. We see each night towns burning; but we hear many of the Sestro men are killed by the inland negroes, so that we fear this war will be unsuccessful.

"The 2d of January.—Last night we saw a prodigious fire break out about eleven o'clock, and this morning see the town of Sestro burnt down to the ground. It contained some hundred houses; so that we find their enemies are too hard for them at present, and consequently our trade is spoiled here. Therefore, about seven o'clock we weighed anchor, to proceed lower down."

4. The second extract, taken from the journal of a surgeon who went from New York on the same trade, is as follows:—"The commander of the vessel sent to acquaint the king that he wanted a cargo of

slaves. The king promised to furnish him, and in order to it set out, designing to surprise some town and make all the people prisoners. Some time after the king sent him word he had not yet met with the desired success, having attempted to break up two towns, but having been twice repulsed, but that he still hoped to procure the number of slaves. In this design he persisted till he met his enemies in the field. A battle was fought, which lasted three days, and the engagement was so bloody that four thousand five hundred men were slain upon the spot." Such is the manner wherein the negroes are procured! Thus the Christians preach the gospel to the heathens!

5. Thus they are procured; but in what numbers and in what manner are they carried to America? Mr. Anderson, in his "History of Trade and Commerce," observes, "England supplies her American colonies with negro slaves amounting in number to about an hundred thousand every year." That is, so many are taken on board our ships, but at least ten thousand of them die on the voyage; about a fourth part more die at the different islands, in what is called the seasoning: so that, at an average, in the passage and seasoning together, thirty thousand die,—that is, properly, are murdered. O earth, O sea, cover not thou their blood!

6. When they are brought down to the shore in order to be sold, our surgeons thoroughly examine them, and that quite naked, women and men, with-

out any distinction. Those that are approved are set on one side. In the mean time a burning iron, with the arms or name of the company, lies in the fire, with which they are marked on the breast. Before they are put into the ships, their masters strip them of all they have on their backs, so that they come on board stark naked, women as well as men. It is common for several hundreds of them to be put on board one vessel, where they are stowed together in as little room as it is possible for them to be crowded. It is easy to suppose what a condition they must soon be in, between heat, thirst, and stench of various kinds; so that it is no wonder so many should die in the passage, but rather that any survive it.

7. When the vessels arrive at their destined port, the negroes are again exposed naked to the eyes of all that flock together, and the examination of their purchasers; then they are separated to the plantations of their several masters, to see each other no more. Here you may see mothers hanging over their daughters, bedewing their naked breasts with tears, and daughters clinging to their parents till the whipper soon obliges them to part. And what can be more wretched than the condition they then enter upon! banished from their country, from their friends and relations forever, from every comfort of life, they are reduced to a state scarce any way preferable to that of beasts of burden. In general a few roots, not of the nicest kind, usually yams or

potatoes, are their food, and two rags, that neither screen them from the heat of the day nor the cold of the night, their covering. Their sleep is very short, their labor continual, and frequently above their strength, so that death sets many of them at liberty before they have lived out half their days. The time they work in the West Indies is from daybreak to noon, and from two o'clock till dark, during which time they are attended by overseers, who, if they think them dilatory, or think any thing not so well done as it should be, whip them most unmercifully, so that you may see their bodies long after wealed and scarred, usually from the shoulders to the waist. And before they are suffered to go to their quarters they have commonly something to do, as collecting herbage for the horses or gathering fuel for the boilers, so that it is often past twelve before they can get home; hence, if their food was not prepared they are sometimes called to labor again before they can satisfy their hunger. And no excuse will avail: if they are not in the field immediately, they must expect to feel the lash. Did the Creator intend that the noblest creatures in the visible world should live such a life as this?

"Are these thy glorious works, Parent of Good?"

* * * * *

IV.—1. This is the plain, unaggravated matter of fact. Such is the manner wherein our African slaves are procured, such the manner wherein they

are removed from their native land, and wherein they are treated in our plantations. I would now inquire whether these things can be defended on the principles of even heathen honesty;—whether they can be reconciled (setting the Bible out of the question) with any degree of either justice or mercy.

2. The grand plea is, "They are authorized by law." But can law, human law, change the nature of things? Can it turn darkness into light, or evil into good? By no means. Notwithstanding ten thousand laws, right is right and wrong is wrong still; there must still remain an essential difference between justice and injustice, cruelty and mercy: so that still I ask, Who can reconcile this treatment of the negroes, first and last, with either mercy or justice?

Where is the justice of inflicting the severest evils on those that have done us no wrong? of depriving those that never injured us, in word or deed, of every comfort of life? of tearing them from their native country, and depriving them of liberty itself,—to which an Angolan has the same natural right as an Englishman, and on which he sets as high a value? Yea, where is the justice of taking away the lives of innocent, inoffensive men? murdering thousands of them in their own land, by the hands of their own countrymen, many thousands year after year on shipboard, and then casting them like dung into the sea, and tens of thousands in that cruel slavery to which they are so unjustly reduced?

3. That slave-holding is utterly inconsistent with mercy is almost too plain to need a proof. Indeed, it is said, "That these negroes, being prisoners of war, our captains and factors buy them merely to save them from being put to death. And is not this mercy?" I answer, 1, Did Sir John Hawkins and many others seize upon men, women, and children, who were at peace in their own fields or houses, merely to save them from death? 2. Was it to save them from death that they knocked out the brains of those they could not bring away? 3. Who occasioned and fomented those wars wherein these poor creatures were taken prisoners? Who excited them, by money, by drink, by every possible means, to fall upon one another? Was it not themselves? They know in their own conscience it was, if they have any conscience left. But, 4, To bring the matter to a short issue, can they say before God that they never took a single voyage or bought a single negro from this motive? They cannot: they well know to get money, not to save lives, was the whole and sole spring of their motions.

4. But if this manner of procuring and treating negroes is not consistent either with mercy or justice, yet there is a plea for it which every man of business will acknowledge to be quite sufficient. Fifty years ago, one meeting an eminent statesman in the lobby of the House of Commons said, "You have been long talking about justice and equity: pray, which is this bill, equity or justice?" He answered, very

short and plain, "It is necessity." Here also the slave-holder fixes his foot; here he rests the strength of his cause. "If it is not quite right, yet it must be so; there is an absolute necessity for it; it is necessary we should procure slaves, and when we have procured them it is necessary to use them with severity, considering their stupidity, stubbornness, and wickedness."

I answer, You stumble at the threshold. I deny that villany is ever necessary. It is impossible that it should ever be necessary for any reasonable creature to violate all the laws of justice, mercy, and truth. No circumstances can make it necessary for a man to burst in sunder all the ties of humanity. It can never be necessary for a rational being to sink himself below a brute. A man can be under no necessity of degrading himself into a wolf. The absurdity of the supposition is so glaring that one would wonder any one can help seeing it.

5. This in general. But, to be more particular, I ask, first, what is necessary? and, secondly, to what end? It may be answered, "The whole method now used by the original purchasers of negroes is necessary to the furnishing our colonies yearly with a hundred thousand slaves." I grant this is necessary to that end. But how is that end necessary? How will you prove it necessary that one hundred, that one, of those slaves should be procured? "Why, it is necessary to my gaining a hundred thousand pounds." Perhaps so; but how is this necessary?

It is very possible you might be both a better
happier man if you had not a quarter of it.
that your gaining one thousand is necessary ei
your present or eternal happiness. "But, ho
you must allow these slaves are necessary for t
tivation of our islands, inasmuch as white m
not able to labor in hot climates." I answe
it were better that all those islands should
uncultivated forever, yea, it were more desirab
they were altogether sunk in the depth of t
than that they should be cultivated at so
price as the violation of justice, mercy, and
But, secondly, the supposition on which you
your argument is false; for white men, even E
men, are well able to labor in hot climates, pr
they are temperate both in meat and drink, an
they inure themselves to it by degrees. I spe
more than I know by experience. It appear
the thermometer that the summer heat in Geo
frequently equal to that in Barbadoes, yea, t
under the line; and yet I and my family, ei
number, did employ all our spare time there i
ing of trees and clearing of ground,—as hard
as any negro need be employed in. The G
family, likewise, forty in number, were emplo
all manner of labor; and this was so far fro
pairing our health, that we all continued pe
well, while the idle ones all round about u
swept away as with a pestilence. It is no
therefore, that white men are not able to labo

in hot climates, full as well as black. But, if they were not, it would be better that none should labor there, that the work should be left undone, than that myriads of innocent men should be murdered, and myriads more dragged into the basest slavery.

6. "But the furnishing us with slaves is necessary for the trade, and wealth, and glory of our nation." Here are several mistakes; for, first, wealth is not necessary to the glory of any nation, but wisdom, virtue, justice, mercy, generosity, public spirit, love of our country: these are necessary to the real glory of a nation, but abundance of wealth is not. Men of understanding allow that the glory of England was full as high in Queen Elizabeth's time as it is now, although our riches and trade were then as much smaller as our virtue was greater. But, secondly, it is not clear that we should have either less money or trade (only less of that detestable trade of man-stealing) if there was not a negro in all our islands, or in all English America. It is demonstrable white men, inured to it by degrees, can work as well as them, and they would do it were negroes out of the way, and proper encouragement given them. However, thirdly, I come back to the same point: better no trade than trade procured by villany; it is far better to have no wealth than to gain wealth at the expense of virtue. Better is honest poverty than all the riches bought by the tears, and sweat, and blood of our fellow-creatures.

7. "However this be, it is necessary when we

have slaves to use them with severity." I pray, to what end is this usage necessary? "Why, to prevent their running away, and to keep them constantly to their labor, that they may not idle away their time, so miserably stupid is this race of men, yea, so stubborn and so wicked." Allowing them to be as stupid as you say, to whom is that stupidity owing? Without question it lies altogether at the door of their inhuman masters, who give them no means, no opportunity of improving their understanding, and, indeed, leave them no motive, either from hope or fear, to attempt any such thing. They were noway remarkable for stupidity while they remained in their own country. The inhabitants of Africa, where they have equal motives and equal means of improvement, are not inferior to the inhabitants of Europe; to some of them they are greatly superior. Impartially survey, in their own country, the natives of Benin and the natives of Lapland. Compare (setting prejudice aside) the Samoeids and the Angolans; and on which side does the advantage lie in point of understanding? Certainly the African is in no respect inferior to the European. Their stupidity, therefore, in our plantations is not natural, otherwise than it is the natural effect of their condition: consequently, it is not their fault, but yours; you must answer for it before God and man.

8. "But their stupidity is not the only reason of our treating them with severity, for it is hard to say which is the greatest, this, or their stubbornness and

wickedness." It may be so; but do not these as well as the other lie at your door? Are not stubbornness, cunning, pilfering, and divers other vices, the natural, necessary fruits of slavery? Is not this an observation which has been made in every age and nation? And what means have you used to remove this stubbornness? Have you tried what mildness and gentleness would do? I knew one that did,—that had prudence and patience to make the experiment,—Mr. Hugh Bryan, who then lived on the borders of South Carolina. And what was the effect? Why, that all his negroes (and he had no small number of them) loved and reverenced him as a father, and cheerfully obeyed him out of love: yea, they were more afraid of a frown from him than of many blows from an overseer. And what pains have you taken, what method have you used, to reclaim them from their wickedness? Have you carefully taught them "that there is a God, a wise, powerful, merciful Being, the Creator and Governor of heaven and earth? that he has appointed a day wherein he will judge the world, will take an account of all our thoughts, words, and actions? that in that day he will reward every child of man according to his works"? that "then the righteous shall inherit the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world, and the wicked shall be cast into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels"? If you have not done this, if you have taken no pains or thought about the matter, can you wonder at their

wickedness? You first acted the villain in making them slaves, whether you stole them or bought them. You kept them stupid and wicked by cutting them off from all opportunities of improving either in knowledge or virtue; and now you assign their want of wisdom and goodness as the reason for using them worse than brute beasts!

V.—1. It remains only to make a little application of the preceding observations. But to whom should that application be made? That may bear a question. Should we address ourselves to the public at large? What effect can this have? It may inflame the world against the guilty, but is not likely to remove that guilt. Should we appeal to the nation in general? This also is striking wide, and is never likely to procure any redress for the sore evil we complain of. As little would it, in all probability, avail to apply to Parliament. So many things which seem of greater importance lie before them, that they are not likely to attend to this. I therefore add a few words to those who are more immediately concerned, whether merchants or planters.

2. May I speak plainly to you? I must. Love constrains me,—love to you as well as to those you are concerned with

Is there a God? You know there is. Is he a just God? Then there must be a state of retribution,—a state wherein the just God will reward every man according to his works. Then what reward will he

render to you? Oh, think betimes, before you drop into eternity! Think now: He shall have judgment without mercy that showed no mercy.

Are you a man? Then you should have a human heart. But have you indeed? What is your heart made of? Is there no such principle as compassion there? Do you never feel another's pain? Have you no sympathy, no sense of human woe, no pity for the miserable? When you saw the flowing eyes, the heaving breasts, or the bleeding sides and tortured limbs of your fellow-creatures, was you a stone or a brute? Did you look upon them with the eyes of a tiger? When you squeezed the agonizing creatures down in the ship, or when you threw their poor mangled remains into the sea, had you no relenting? Did not one tear drop from your eye, one sigh escape from your breast? Do you feel no relenting now? If you do not, you must go on till the measure of your iniquities is full. Then will the great God deal with you as you have dealt with them, and require all their blood at your hands; and at that day it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah than for you! But if your heart does relent, though in a small degree, know it is a call from the God of love; and to-day, if you hear his voice, harden not your heart; to-day resolve, God being your helper, to escape for your life. Regard not money. All that a man hath will he give for his life. Whatever you lose, lose not your soul; nothing can countervail that

loss. Immediately quit the horrid trade; at all events, be an honest man.

3. This equally concerns every merchant who is engaged in the slave-trade. It is you that induce the African villain to sell his countrymen, and, in order thereto, to steal, rob, murder men, women, and children without number, by enabling the English villain to pay him for so doing, whom you overpay for his execrable labor. It is your money that is the spring of all, that empowers him to go on, so that whatever he or the African does in this matter is all your act and deed. And is your conscience quite reconciled to this? does it never reproach you at all? Has gold entirely blinded your eyes and stupefied your heart? Can you see, can you feel, no harm therein? Is it doing as you would be done to? Make the case your own. "Master," said a slave at Liverpool to the merchant that owned him, "what if some of my countrymen were to come here and take away my mistress, and Master Tommy and Master Billy, and carry them into our country and make them slaves? how would you like it?" His answer was worthy of a man: "I will never buy a slave more while I live." Oh, let his resolution be yours; have no more any part in this detestable business; instantly leave it to those unfeeling wretches "who laugh at human nature and compassion." Be you a man,—not a wolf, a devourer of the human species. Be merciful, that you may obtain mercy.

4. And this equally concerns every gentleman

that has an estate in our American plantations, yea, all slave-holders of whatever rank and degree, seeing men-buyers are exactly on a level with men-stealers. Indeed, you say, "I pay honestly for my goods, and I am not concerned to know how they are come by." Nay, but you are; you are deeply concerned to know they are honestly come by, otherwise you are partaker with a thief, and are not a jot honester than him. But you know they are not honestly come by; you know they are procured by means nothing near so honest as picking of pockets, housebreaking, or robbery upon the highway. You know they are procured by a deliberate series of more complicated villany, of fraud, robbery, and murder, than was ever practised either by Mahometans or Pagans; in particular by murders of all kinds, by the blood of the innocent poured upon the ground like water. Now, it is your money that pays the merchant, and through him the captain and the African butchers. You, therefore, are guilty, yea, principally guilty, of all these frauds, robberies, and murders. You are the spring that puts all the rest in motion: they would not stir a step without you; therefore the blood of all these wretches who die before their time, whether in this country or elsewhere, lies upon your head. The blood of thy brother (for, whether thou wilt believe it or no, such he is in the sight of Him that made him) crieth against thee from the earth, from the ship, and from the waters. Oh, whatever it costs, put a stop to its cry before it be too late. Instantly,

at any price, were it the half of your goods, deliver thyself from blood-guiltiness. Thy hands, thy bed, thy furniture, thy house, thy lands, are at present stained with blood. Surely it is enough: accumulate no more guilt; spill no more the blood of the innocent; do not hire another to shed blood; do not pay him for doing it. Whether you are a Christian or no, show yourself a man; be not more savage than a lion or a bear.

5. Perhaps you will say, "I do not buy any negroes: I only use those left me by my father." So far so well; but is it enough to satisfy your own conscience? Had your father, have you, has any man living, a right to use another as a slave? It cannot be, even setting revelation aside; it cannot be that either war or contract can give any man such a property in another as he has in his sheep and oxen; much less is it possible that any child of man should ever be born a slave. Liberty is the right of every human creature as soon as he breathes the vital air; and no human law can deprive him of that right, which he derives from the law of nature.

If, therefore, you have any regard to justice, (to say nothing of mercy, nor of the revealed law of God,) render unto all their due; give liberty to whom liberty is due, that is, to every child of man, to every partaker of human nature. Let none serve you by his own act and deed, by his own volu
ce. Away with all whips, all chains, all
ntle towards all men; and se

you invariably do unto every one as you would he should do unto you.

6. O thou God of love, thou who art loving to every man, and whose mercy is over all thy works, thou who art the Father of the spirits of all flesh, and who art rich in mercy unto all, thou who hast mingled of one blood all the nations upon earth, have compassion upon these outcasts of men who are trodden down as dung upon the earth! Arise and help these that have no helper, whose blood is spilt upon the ground like water! Are not these also the work of thine own hands, the purchase of thy Son's blood? Stir them up to cry unto thee in the land of their captivity, and let their complaint come up before thee; let it enter into thy ears! Make even those that lead them away captive to pity them, and turn their captivity as the rivers in the south. Oh, burst thou all their chains in sunder, more especially the chains of their sins. Thou Saviour of all, make them free that they may be free indeed!

APPENDIX.

CHARLES WESLEY also was deeply concerned for the suffering of the negroes on the Southern plantations, as well as for the demoralizing effect, on the white population, of the whole system of Slavery. Under date of July, 1736, he writes from South Carolina,—

"I have observed much and heard more of the cruelty of masters towards their negroes; but now I received an authentic account of some horrid instances thereof. I saw myself that the giving a slave-boy a child of its own age to tyrannize over, to abuse and beat out of sport, was a common practice; nor is it strange that, being thus trained up in cruelty, they should afterwards arrive at such a perfection in it."—*Whitehead's Life of Wesley*, vol. i. p. 94.

METHODIST TESTIMONY.

The learned Adam Clarke, author of a voluminous commentary on the Scriptures, says,—

"Slave-dealers, whether those who carry on the traffic in human flesh and blood, or those who steal

a person in order to sell him into bondage, or those who buy such stolen men or women, no matter of what color or what country, or the nations who legalize or connive at such traffic,—all these are men-stealers, and God classes them with the most flagitious of mortals."

Under the superintendence of Dr. Coke, who was appointed by John Wesley himself as the first bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Churches in America, the following remarkable minute was adopted by the Conference in 1784 :—

"Every member in our Society who has slaves in those States where the law will admit of freeing them, shall, after notice given him by the preacher, set them free within twelve months, (except in Virginia, and there within two years,) at specified periods according to age. Every person concerned who will not comply with these rules shall have liberty to withdraw within twelve months after the notice is given, otherwise to be excluded. No person holding slaves shall in future be admitted into the Society until he previously comply with these rules respecting Slavery."

These regulations were severely attacked at a subsequent Conference held in Virginia, and, though defended with great firmness by Dr. Coke, they were suspended a year afterwards.—*Lee's History of the Methodists.*

It is related in Dr. Coke's biography that his power over the assembly in his local preaching was

great; and, when this obnoxious subject was omitted, he was caressed and received with veneration and respect. "But on other occasions, when this fatal chord was touched, it instantly vibrated discord throughout the congregation, and applause gave place to execrations. In some places the members of the Society were disgusted, and many withdrew." Notwithstanding his high official position, he at times narrowly escaped with his life from the vengeance of the mob.

From these extracts it will be seen that the testimony borne by John Wesley and other religious men of that day, while more fearless and uncompromising than is customary in our own, was not universally acceptable to the upholders of Slavery or the communities in which it existed.

In 1797 the Discipline contained the following paragraph:—"The preachers and other members of our Society are requested to consider the subject of negro-slavery with deep attention, and that they impart to the General Conference, through the medium of the Yearly Conference, or otherwise, any important thoughts on the subject, that the Conference may have full light, in order to take further steps towards eradicating this enormous evil from that part of the Church of God with which they are connected."

BAPTIST TESTIMONY.

At a meeting of the General Committee of the

Baptists of Virginia in 1789, the following resolution was offered by Elder John Leland and adopted:—

"*Resolved*, That Slavery is a violent deprivation of the rights of nature, and inconsistent with republican government, and therefore we recommend it to our brethren to make use of every measure to extirpate this horrid evil from the land, and pray Almighty God that our honorable Legislature may have it in their power to proclaim the great jubilee consistent with the principles of good policy."

EPISCOPAL TESTIMONY.

Bishop Horsley says, "Slavery is an injustice which no consideration of policy can extenuate."

Bishop Porteus says, "The Bible classes menstealers, or slave-traders, among the murderers of fathers and mothers, and the most profane criminals on earth."

PRESBYTERIAN TESTIMONY.

From a resolution denunciatory of Slavery, unanimously adopted by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in 1818, we make the following extract:—

"We consider the voluntary enslaving of one part of the human race by another as a gross violation of the most precious and sacred rights of human nature, as utterly inconsistent with the law of God, which requires us to love our neighbor as ourselves, and as totally irreconcilable with the spirit and prin-

ciples of the gospel of Christ, which enjoins that 'all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.' * * * We rejoice that the Church to which we belong commenced as early as any other in this country the good work of endeavoring to put an end to slavery, and that in the same work many of its members have ever since been and now are among the most active, vigorous, and efficient laborers. * * * We earnestly exhort them to continue, and, if possible, to increase their exertion to effect the total abolition of Slavery."

A committee of the Synod of Kentucky, in an address to the Presbyterians of that State, says, "That our negroes will be worse off if emancipated, is, we feel, but a specious pretext for lulling our own pangs of conscience and answering the arguments of the philanthropist. None of us believe that God has so created a whole race that it is better for them to remain in perpetual bondage."

RAYNAL.

The Abbé Raynal says, "He who supports Slavery is the enemy of the human race. He divides it into two societies of legal assassins; the oppressors and the oppressed. I shall not be afraid to cite to the tribunal of reason and justice those governments which tolerate this cruelty, or which even are not ashamed to make it the basis of their power."

GENERAL APPENDIX

GENERAL APPENDIX.

WARBURTON.

Extract from a Discourse preached by Warburton, Bishop of Gloucester, before the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, at their Anniversary Meeting, on the 21st of February, 1766.

"To talk (as in herds of cattle) of property in rational creatures—creatures endowed with all our faculties, possessing all our qualities but that of color, our brethren both by nature and grace—shocks all the feelings of humanity and the dictates of common sense. Nothing is more certain in itself and apparent to all, than that the infamous traffic for slaves directly infringes both divine and human law. Nature created man free; and grace invites him to assert his freedom. In excuse of this violation it hath been pretended, that though indeed these miserable outcasts of humanity be torn from their homes and native country by fraud and violence, yet they thereby became the happier, and their condition the more eligible. But who are you who pretend to judge of another man's happiness,—that state which

under the guidance of his Maker, forms for himself, and not one man for another? To know what constitutes mine or your happiness is the sole prerogative of Him who created us and cast us in so various and different moulds. Did your slaves ever complain to you of their unhappiness amidst their native woods and deserts? Or, rather, let me ask, did they ever cease complaining of their condition under you, their lordly masters? where they see, indeed, the accommodations of civil life, but see them all pass to others, themselves unbenefited by them. Be so gracious, then, ye petty tyrants over human freedom, to let your slaves judge for themselves what it is which makes their own happiness. And then see whether they do not place it in a return to their own country, rather than in the contemplation of your grandeur, of which their misery makes so large a part,—a return so passionately longed for, that, despairing of happiness here, that is, of escaping the chains of their cruel taskmasters, they console themselves with feigning it to be the gracious reward of Heaven in their future state; which I do not find their haughty masters have as yet concerned themselves to invade. The less hardy, indeed, wait for this felicity till overwearied nature sets them free; but the more resolved have recourse even to self-violence to force a speedier passage."

VIRGINIA GAZETTE.

Extract from an Address in the Virginia Gazette, March 19, 1767.

"Long and serious reflections upon the nature and consequences of slavery have convinced me that it is a violation both of justice and religion; that it is dangerous to the safety of the community in which it prevails; that it is destructive to the growth of arts and sciences; and lastly, that it produces a numerous and very fatal train of vices, both in the slave and in his master.

"To prove these assertions shall be the purpose of the following essay.

"That slavery, then, is a violation of justice, will plainly appear when we consider what justice is. It is simply and truly defined, by Justinian,—

"*Constans et perpetua voluntas jus suum cuique tribuendi.*

"A constant endeavor to give every man his right.

"Now, as freedom is unquestionably the birthright of all mankind, Africans as well as Europeans, to keep the former in a state of slavery is a constant violation of that right, and therefore of justice.

"The ground on which the civilians who favor slavery admit it to be just, namely, consent, force, and birth, is totally disputable. For surely a man's own will and consent cannot be allowed to introduce so important an innovation into society as slavery, or to make himself an outlaw, which is really the state of a

slave, since, neither consenting to nor aiding the laws of the society in which he lives, he is neither bound to obey them nor entitled to their protection.

"To found any right in force is to frustrate all right and involve every thing in confusion, violence, and rapine. With these two the last must fall, since if the parent cannot justly be made a slave, neither can the child be born in slavery. 'It is not true,' says Baron Montesquieu, 'that a free man can sell himself; for sale supposes a price; but a slave and his property becomes immediately that of his master: the slave can therefore receive no price, nor the master pay, &c. And if a man cannot sell himself, nor a prisoner of war be reduced to slavery, much less can his child.'

"Yet even these rights of imposing slavery, questionable, nay, refutable, as they are, we have not to authorize the bondage of the Africans. For neither do they consent to be our slaves, nor do we purchase them of their conquerors. The British merchants obtain them from Africa by violence, artifice, and treachery, with a few trinkets to prompt those unfortunate people to enslave one another by force or stratagem. Purchase them indeed they may, under the authority of an act of the British Parliament,—an act entailing upon the Africans, with whom we are not at war, and over whom a British Parliament could not of right assume even a shadow of authority, the dreadful curse of perpetual slavery upon them and their children forever. There can-

not be in nature, there is not in all history, an instance in which every right of men is more flagrantly violated. The laws of the ancients never authorized the making slaves but of those nations whom they had conquered; yet they were heathens and we are Christians. They were misled by a monstrous religion, divested of humanity by a horrible and barbarous worship; we are directed by the unerring precepts of the revealed religion we possess, enlightened by its wisdom, and humanized by its benevolence: before them were gods deformed with passions, and horrible for every cruelty and vice; before us is that incomparable pattern of meekness, charity, love, and justice to mankind which so transcendently distinguished the Founder of Christianity and his ever-amiable doctrines.

"Reader, remember that the corner-stone of your religion is, *to do unto others as you would they should do unto you:* ask then your own heart whether it would not abhor any one, as the most outrageous violator of that and every other principle of right, justice, and humanity, who should make a slave of you and your posterity forever. Remember that God knoweth the heart: lay not this flattering unction to your soul, that it is the custom of the country; that you found it so; that not your will but your necessity consents. Ah! think how little such an excuse will avail you in that awful day when your Saviour shall pronounce judgment on you for breaking a law too plain to be misunderstood, too sacred

to be violated. If we say that we are Christians, yet act more inhumanly and unjustly than heathens, with what dreadful justice must this sentence of our blessed Saviour fall upon us!—'Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.' (Matt. vii. 21.) Think a moment how much your temporal, your eternal welfare depends upon an abolition of a practice which deforms the image of your God, tramples on his revealed will, infringes the most sacred rights, and violates humanity."

DR. RUSH.

Dr. Benjamin Rush, an eminent physician of Philadelphia, issued, in 1773, an Address to the Inhabitants of America on Slave-Keeping, from which we extract the following:—

"Liberty and property form the basis of abundance and good agriculture: I never observed it to flourish where those rights of mankind were not firmly established. The earth, which multiplies her productions with a kind of profusion under the hands of the free-born laborer, seems to shrink into barrenness under the sweat of the slave. Such is the will of the Great Author of our nature, who has created man free, and assigned to him the earth, that he might cultivate his possession with the sweat of his brow, but still should enjoy his liberty.

"Now, if the plantations in the islands and the southern colonies were more limited, and freemen only

employed in working them, the general product would be greater, although the profits to individuals would be less,—a circumstance, this, which, by diminishing opulence in a few, would suppress luxury and vice, and promote that equal distribution of property which appears best calculated to promote the welfare of society.* I know it has been said by some that none but the natives of warm climates could undergo the excessive heat and labor of the West India Islands. But this argument is founded upon an error; for the reverse of this is true. I have been informed, by good authority, that one European who escapes the first or second year will do twice the work and live twice the number of years that an ordinary negro man will do: nor need we be surprised at this, when we hear that such is the natural fertility of soil and so numerous the spontaneous fruits of the earth in the interior parts of Africa, that the natives live in plenty at the expense

* From this account of Le Poivre we may learn the futility of the argument that the number of vessels in the sugar-trade serve as a nursery for seamen, and that the negroes consume a large quantity of the manufactures of Great Britain. If freemen only were employed in the islands, a double quantity of sugar would be made, and of course twice the number of vessels and seamen would be made use of in the trade. One freeman consumes yearly four times the quantity of British goods that a negro does. Slaves multiply in all countries slowly. Freemen multiply in proportion as slavery is discouraged. It is to be hoped therefore that motives of policy will at last induce Britons to give up a trade which those of justice and humanity cannot prevail upon them to relinquish.

of little or no labor, which in warm climates has ever been found to be incompatible with long life and happiness. Future ages, therefore, when they read the accounts of the slave-trade, (if they do not regard them as fabulous,) will be at a loss which to condemn most, our folly or our guilt in abetting this direct violation of the laws of nature and religion."

"Christ commands us to look upon all mankind, even our enemies, as our neighbors and brethren, and 'in all things *to do unto them whatever we would wish they should do unto us.*' He tells us, further, that his 'kingdom is not of this world,' and therefore constantly avoids saying any thing that might interfere directly with the Roman or Jewish governments: so that although he does not call upon masters to emancipate their slaves, or upon slaves to assert that liberty wherewith God and nature had made them free, yet there is scarcely a parable or a sermon in the whole history of his life but what contains the strongest arguments against slavery. Every prohibition of covetousness, intemperance, pride, uncleanness, theft, and murder, which he delivered, every lesson of meekness, humility, forbearance, charity, self-denial, and brotherly love, which he taught, are levelled against this evil; for slavery, while it includes all the former vices, necessarily excludes the practice of all the later virtues, both from the master and the slave. Let such, therefore, who vindicate the traffic of buying and selling souls, seek some modern system of religion to support it,

and not presume to sanctify their crime by attempting to reconcile it to the sublime and perfect religion of the Great Author of Christianity."

"Ye men of sense and virtue, ye advocates for American liberty, rouse up and espouse the cause of humanity and general liberty. Bear a testimony against a vice which degrades human nature and dissolves that universal tie of benevolence which should connect all the children of men together in one great family. The plant of liberty is of so tender a nature that it cannot thrive long in the neighborhood of slavery. Remember, the eyes of all Europe are fixed upon you, to preserve an asylum for freedom in this country after the last pillars of it are fallen in every other quarter of the globe.

"But chiefly, ye ministers of the gospel, whose dominion over the principles and actions of men is so universally acknowledged and felt, ye who estimate the worth of your fellow-creatures by their immortality, and therefore must look upon all mankind as equal, let your zeal keep pace with your opportunities to put a stop to slavery. While you enforce the duties of 'tithe and cummin,' neglect not the weightier laws of justice and humanity. Slavery is a hydra sin, and includes in it every violation of the precepts of the law and the gospel. In vain will you command your flocks to offer up the incense of faith and charity while they continue to mingle the sweat and blood of negro slaves with their sacrifices."

SUNDRY TESTIMONIES.*

SOCRATES:—"Slavery is a system of outrage and robbery."

ARISTOTLE:—"It is neither good, nor is it just, seeing all men are by nature alike and equal, that one should be lord and master over others."

POLYBIUS:—"None but unprincipled and beastly men in society assume the mastery over their fellows, as it is among bulls, bears, and cocks."

PLATO:—"Slavery is a system of the most complete injustice."

CICERO:—"By the grand laws of nature, all men are born free, and this law is universally binding upon all men."

"Eternal justice is the basis of all human laws."

"Whatever is just is also the true law; nor can this true law be abrogated by any written enactments."

"If there be such a power in the decrees and commands of fools, that the nature of things is changed by their votes, why do they not decree that what is bad and pernicious shall be regarded as good and wholesome, or why, if the law can make wrong right, can it not make bad good?"

* For many of these quotations, the compilers are indebted to Helper's valuable work entitled "The Impending Crisis in the South."

"Those who have made pernicious and unjust decrees have made any thing rather than laws."

LACTANTIUS:—"Justice teaches men to know God and to love men, to love and assist one another, being all equally the children of God."

LORD MANSFIELD:—"The state of slavery is of such a nature that it is incapable of being introduced on any reasons, moral or political, but only by positive law, which preserves its force long after the reasons, occasion, and time itself whence it was created, are erased from the memory. It is so odious that nothing can be sufficient to support it but positive law. Whatever inconveniences, therefore, may follow from the decision, I cannot say this case is allowed or approved by the law of England, and therefore the black must be discharged."

LOCKE:—"Slavery is so vile, so miserable a state of man, and so directly opposite to the generous temper and courage of our nation, that it is hard to be convinced that an Englishman, much less a gentleman, should plead for it."

Again, he says, "Though the earth and all inferior creatures be common to all men, yet every man has a property in his own person: this nobody has any right to but himself."

WILLIAM PITT:—"It is injustice to permit slavery to remain for a single hour."

CHARLES FOX:—"With regard to a regulation of slavery, my detestation of its existence induces me to know no such thing as a regulation of robbery and a restriction of murder. Personal freedom is a right of which he who deprives a fellow-creature is criminal in so depriving him, and he who withholds is no less criminal in withholding."

Dr. JOHNSON:—"No man is by nature the property of another. The rights of nature must be some way forfeited before they can justly be taken away."

Dr. PRICE:—"If you have a right to make another man a slave, he has a right to make you a slave."

BUFFON:—"It is apparent that the unfortunate negroes are endowed with excellent hearts, and possess the seeds of every human virtue. I cannot write their history without lamenting their miserable condition. Humanity revolts at those odious oppressions that result from avarice."

BLACKSTONE:—"If neither captivity nor contract can, by the plain law of nature and reason, reduce the parent to a state of slavery, much less can they reduce the offspring."

Again, he says, "The primary aim of society is to protect individuals in the enjoyment of those absolute rights which were vested in them by the immutable laws of nature. Hence it follows that the

first and primary end of human laws is to maintain those absolute rights of individuals."

Again, "If any human law shall allow or require us to commit crime, we are bound to transgress that human law, or else we must offend both the natural and divine."

LORD COKE:—"What the Parliament doth shall be holden for naught whenever it shall enact that which is contrary to the rights of nature."

HAMPDEN:—"The essence of all law is justice. What is not justice is not law; and what is not law ought not to be obeyed."

HARRINGTON:—"All men naturally are equal; for though nature with a noble variety has made different features and lineaments of men, yet as to freedom she has made every one alike and given them the same desires."

FORTESCUE:—"Those rights which God and nature have established, and which are therefore called natural rights, such as life and liberty, need not the aid of human laws to be more effectually invested in every man than they are; neither do they receive any additional strength when declared by the municipal laws to be inviolable. On the contrary, no human power has any authority to abridge or destroy them unless the owner himself shall commit some act that amounts to a forfeiture."

Again, he says, "The law, therefore, which supports slavery and opposes liberty, must necessarily be condemned as cruel, for every feeling of human nature advocates liberty. Slavery is introduced by human wickedness; but God advocates liberty, by the nature which he has given to man."

LORD BROUGHAM:—"Tell me not of rights; talk not of the property of the planter in his slaves. I deny the right; I acknowledge not the property. In vain you tell me of laws that sanction such a claim. There is a law above all the enactments of human codes, the same throughout the world, the same in all times: it is the law written by the finger of God on the hearts of men; and by that law, unchangeable and eternal, while men despise fraud, and loathe rapine, and abhor blood, they shall reject with indignation the wild and guilty fantasy that man can hold property in man."

EDMUND BURKE:—"Slavery is a state so improper, so degrading, and so ruinous to the feelings and capacities of human nature, that it ought not to be suffered to exist."

CURRAN, in a burst of passionate eloquence, exclaims:—"I speak in the spirit of British law, which makes liberty commensurate with and inseparable from British soil; which proclaims even to the stranger and the sojourner, the moment he

sets his foot upon British earth, that the ground on which he treads is holy and consecrated by the genius of Universal Emancipation. No matter in what language his doom may have been pronounced; no matter what complexion, incompatible with freedom, an Indian or African sun may have burnt upon him; no matter in what disastrous battle his liberty may have been cloven down; no matter with what solemnities he may have been devoted upon the altar of slavery; the moment he touches the sacred soil of Britain, the altar and the god sink together in the dust; his soul walks abroad in her own majesty; and he stands redeemed, regenerated, and disenthralled by the irresistible genius of Universal Emancipation."

BEATTIE:—"Slavery is inconsistent with the dearest and most essential rights of man's nature; it is detrimental to virtue and industry; it hardens the heart to those tender sympathies which form the most lovely part of the human character; it involves the innocent in hopeless misery, in order to procure wealth and pleasure for the authors of that misery; it seeks to degrade into brutes beings whom the Lord of Heaven and Earth endowed with rational souls and created for immortality; in short, it is utterly repugnant to every principle of reason, religion, humanity, and conscience. It is impossible for a considerate and unprejudiced mind to think of slavery without horror."

COWPER.

"Slaves cannot breathe in England: if their lungs
Receive our air, that moment they are free.
They touch our country, and their shackles fall.
That's noble, and bespeaks a nation proud
And jealous of the blessing. Spread it, then,
And let it circulate through every vein
Of all your Empire, that where Britain's power
Is felt, mankind may feel her mercy too!"

MILLER:—"The human mind revolts at a serious discussion of the subject of slavery. Every individual, whatever be his country or complexion, is entitled to freedom."

MACKNIGHT:—"Men-stealers are inserted among the daring criminals against whom the law of God directed its awful curses. These were persons who kidnapped men to sell them for slaves; and this practice seems inseparable from the other iniquities and oppressions of slavery; nor can a slave-dealer easily keep free from this criminality, if indeed the receiver is as bad as the thief."

THOMAS SCOTT, the celebrated English Presbyterian Commentator, says,—

"To number the persons of men with beasts, sheep, and horses, as the stock of a farm, or with bales of goods, as the cargo of a ship, is, no doubt, a most detestable and anti-Christian practice."

MONTESQUIEU, in his "Spirit of Laws," satirically writes:—

"Were I to vindicate our rights to make slaves of the negroes, these should be my arguments:—

"The Europeans, having extirpated the Americans, were obliged to make slaves of the Africans, for clearing such vast tracts of land.

"Sugar would be too dear if the plants which produce it were cultivated by any other than slaves.

"These creatures are all over black, and with such a flat nose that they can scarcely be pitied.

"It is hardly to be believed that God, who is a wise being, should place a soul, especially a good soul, in such a black ugly body.

"The negroes prefer a glass necklace to that gold which polite nations so highly value: can there be a greater proof of their wanting common sense?

"It is impossible for us to suppose these creatures to be men, because, allowing them to be men, a suspicion would follow that we ourselves are not Christians."—Book xv. chap. v. Again, he says,—

"What civil law can restrain a slave from running away, since he is not a member of society?"

"Slavery is contrary to the fundamental principles of all societies."

"In democracies, where they are all upon an equality, slavery is contrary to the principles of the Constitution."

"Nothing puts one nearer the condition of a brute than always to see freemen and not be free."

"Even the earth itself, which teems with profusion under the cultivating hand of the free-born laborer, shrinks into barrenness from the contaminating sweat of a slave."

Dr. ROBERTSON, in treating of those causes which weakened the feudal system, and finally abolished slavery in Europe in the fourteenth century, has the following observations:—

"The gentle spirit of the Christian religion, together with the doctrines which it teaches concerning the original equality of mankind, as well as the impartial eye with which the Almighty regards men of every condition and admits them to a participation of his benefits, are inconsistent with servitude. But in this, as in many other instances, considerations of interest and the maxims of false policy led men to a conduct inconsistent with their principles. They were so sensible, however, of the inconsistency, that to set their fellow-Christians at liberty from servitude was deemed an act of piety highly meritorious, and acceptable to Heaven. The humane spirit of the Christian religion struggled with the maxims and manners of the world, and contributed more than any other circumstance to introduce the practice of manumission. The formality of manumission was executed in a church or a religious assembly. The person to be set free was led round the great altar, with a torch in his hand: he took hold of the horns

of the altar, and there the solemn words conferring liberty were pronounced."

GROTIUS :—"Those are men-stealers who abduct, keep, sell, or buy slaves or freemen. To steal a man is the highest kind of theft."

LUTHER :—"Unjust violence is by no means the ordinance of God, and therefore can bind no one, in conscience and right, to obey, whether the command comes from pope, emperor, king, or master."

LOUIS X. :—"As all men are by nature free born, and as this kingdom is called the Kingdom of Franks, (freemen,) it shall be so in reality. It is therefore decreed that enfranchisement shall be granted throughout the whole kingdom upon just and reasonable terms."

LEO X. :—"Not only does the Christian religion, but nature herself, cry out against the state of slavery."

GREGORY XVI.

It has been only about twenty years since Pope Gregory XVI. distinguished himself by issuing a famous bull against slavery, from which the following is an extract :—

"Placed as we are on the Supreme seat of the apostles, and acting, though by no merits of our own, as the vicegerent of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who through his great mercy condescended to make himself man and to die for the redemption of

the world, we regard as a duty devolving on our pastoral functions, that we endeavor to turn aside our faithful flocks entirely from the inhuman traffic in negroes or any other human beings whatever. . . . . In progress of time, as the clouds of heathen superstition became gradually dispersed, circumstances reached that point that during several centuries there were no slaves allowed amongst the great majority of the Christian nations; but with grief we are compelled to add that there afterwards arose, even among the faithful, a race of men, who, basely blinded by the appetite and desire of sordid lucre, did not hesitate to reduce, in remote regions of the earth, Indians, negroes, and other wretched beings, to the misery of slavery; or, finding the trade established and augmented, to assist the shameful crime of others. Nor did many of the most glorious of the Roman Pontiffs omit severely to reprove their conduct, as injurious to their souls' health and disgraceful to the Christian name. Among these may be especially quoted the bull of Paul III., which bears the date of the 29th of May, 1537, addressed to the Cardinal Archbishop of Toledo; and another, still more comprehensive, by Urban VIII., dated the 22d of April, 1636, to the collector Jurius of the Apostolic Chamber in Portugal, most severely castigating by name those who presumed to subject either East or West Indians to slavery, to sell, buy, exchange, or give them away, to separate them from their wives and children, despoil

them of their goods and property, to bring or transmit them to other places, or by any means to deprive them of liberty, or retain them in slavery; also most severely castigating those who should presume or dare to afford council, aid, favor, or assistance, under any pretext, or borrowed color, to those doing the aforesaid; or should preach or teach that it is lawful, or should otherwise presume or dare to co-operate, by any possible means, with the aforesaid. . . . . Wherefore, we, desiring to divert this disgrace from the whole confines of Christianity, having summoned several of our venerable brothers, their Eminences the Cardinals of the H. R. Church, to our council, and having maturely deliberated on the whole matter, pursuing the footsteps of our predecessors, admonish by our apostolical authority, and urgently invoke in the Lord, all Christians, of whatever condition, that none henceforth dare to subject to slavery, unjustly persecute, or despoil of their goods, Indians, negroes, or other classes of men, or be accessories to others, or furnish them aid or assistance in so doing; and on no account henceforth to exercise that inhuman traffic by which negroes are reduced to slavery, as if they were not men, but automata or chattels, and are sold in defiance of all the laws of justice and humanity, and devoted to severe and intolerable labors. We further reprobate, by our apostolical authority, all the above-described offences as utterly unworthy the Christian name; and by the same authority we rigidly prohibit and

interdict all and every individual, whether ecclesiastical or laical, from presuming to defend that commerce in negro slaves under pretence or borrowed color, or to teach or publish in any manner, publicly or privately, things contrary to the admonitions which we have given in these letters.

"And, finally, that these our letters may be rendered more apparent to all, and that no person may allege any ignorance thereof, we decree and order that it shall be published according to custom, and copies thereof be properly affixed to the gates of St. Peter and of the Apostolic Chancel, every and in like manner to the General Court of Mount Citatorio, and in the field of the Campus Florae and also through the city, by one of our heralds, according to aforesaid custom.

"Given at Rome, at the Palace of Santa Maria Major, under the seal of the fisherman, on the 3d day of December, 1837, and in the ninth year of our pontificate.

"Countersigned by Cardinal A. Lambruschini."

LAFAYETTE.

"I would never have drawn my sword in the cause of America if I could have conceived that thereby I was founding a land of slavery."

Again, while in the prison of Magdeburg, he says, "I know not what disposition has been made of my plantation at Cayenne; but I hope Madame de

Lafayette will take care that the negroes who cultivate it shall preserve their liberty."

WASHINGTON.

In a letter to John F. Mercer, dated September 9th, 1786, General Washington writes,—

"I never mean, unless some particular circumstances should compel me to it, to possess another slave by purchase, it being among my *first wishes* to see some plan adopted by which slavery in this country may be abolished by law."

In a letter to Robert Morris, dated Mount Vernon, April 12, 1786, he makes the following declaration with regard to slavery:—

"I can only say that there is not a man living who wishes more sincerely than I do to see a plan adopted for the abolition of it. But there is only one proper and effectual mode by which it can be accomplished, and that is by legislative authority; and this, as far as my suffrage will go, shall never be wanting."

He says, in a letter

"To the MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE, April 5th, 1788.

"The scheme, my dear marquis, which you propose as a precedent to encourage the emancipation of the black people in this country from the state of bondage in which they are held, is a striking evidence of the benevolence of your heart. I shall be happy to join you in so laudable a work, but will defer going into a detail of the business till I have the pleasure of seeing you."

In another letter to Lafayette, he writes,—

"The benevolence of your heart, my dear marquis, is so conspicuous on all occasions, that I never wonder at any fresh proofs of it; but your late purchase of an estate in the Colony of Cayenne, with a view of emancipating the slaves on it, is a generous and noble proof of your humanity. Would to God a like spirit might diffuse itself generally into the minds of the people of this country!"

In a letter to Sir John Sinclair, he further said,—

"There are in Pennsylvania laws for the gradual abolition of slavery, which neither Virginia nor Maryland have at present, but which nothing is more certain than they must have, and at a period not remote."

From his last will and testament we make the following extract:—

"Upon the decease of my wife, it is my will and desire that all the slaves which I hold in my own right shall receive their freedom. To emancipate them during her life would, though earnestly wished by me, be attended with such insuperable difficulties, on account of their intermixture by marriage with the dower negroes, as to excite the most painful sensation, if not disagreeable consequences, from the latter, while both descriptions are in the occupancy of the same proprietor, it not being in my under the tenure by which the dower ne ... manumit them."

... rs. Washington learned, from the

her deceased husband, that the only obstacle to the immediate perfection of this provision was her right of dower, she at once gave it up, and the slaves were made free.

JEFFERSON.

On the 39th and 40th pages of his "Notes on Virginia," Jefferson says,—

"There must doubtless be an unhappy influence on the manners of our people, produced by the existence of slavery among us. The whole commerce between master and slave is a perpetual exercise of the most boisterous passions,—the most unremitting despotism on the one part, and degrading submissions on the other. Our children see this, and learn to imitate it; for man is an imitative animal. This quality is the germ of all education in him. From his cradle to his grave, he is learning to do what he sees others do. If a parent could find no motive, either in his philanthropy or his self-love, for restraining the intemperance of passion towards his slave, it should always be a sufficient one that his child is present. But generally it is not sufficient. The parent storms, the child looks on, catches the lineaments of wrath, puts on the same airs in the circle of smaller slaves, gives a loose rein to the worst of passions, and, thus nursed, educated, and daily exercised in tyranny, cannot but be stamped by it with odious peculiarities. The man must be a prodigy who can retain his manners and morals undepraved by such circumstances. And with what

execration should the statesman be loaded, who, permitting one half the citizens thus to trample on the rights of the other, transforms those into despots and these into enemies, destroys the morals of the one part and the *amor patriæ* of the other! for if a slave can have a country in this world, it must be any other in preference to that in which he is born to live and labor for another; in which he must look up the faculties of his nature, contribute, as far as depends on his individual endeavors, to the evanishment of the human race, or entail his own miserable condition on the endless generations proceeded from him. With the morals of the people, their industry also is destroyed; for, in a warm climate, no man will labor for himself who can make another labor for him. This is so true, that of the proprietors of slaves a very small portion, indeed, are ever seen to labor. And can the liberties of a nation be thought secure, when we have removed their only firm basis, —a conviction in the minds of the people that these liberties are of the gift of God? that they are not to be violated but with his wrath? Indeed, I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just; that his justice cannot sleep forever; that, considering numbers, nature, and natural means only, a revolution of the wheel of fortune, an exchange of situation, is among possible events! that it may become probable by supernatural interference! The Almighty has no attribute which can take side with us in such a contest." Again, he writes,—

"We must wait with patience the workings of an overruling Providence, and hope that that is preparing the deliverance of these our brethren. When the measure of their tears shall be full, when their groans shall have involved heaven itself in darkness, doubtless a God of justice will awaken to their distress. Nothing is more certainly written in the Book of Fate, than that this people shall be free."

HENRY.

The eloquent Patrick Henry says, in a letter dated January 18, 1773, on receiving one of Benezet's tracts on slavery,—

"Is it not a little surprising that the professors of Christianity, whose chief excellence consists in softening the human heart, in cherishing and improving its finer feelings, should encourage a practice so totally repugnant to the first impressions of right and wrong? What adds to the wonder is, that this abominable practice has been introduced in the most enlightened ages. Times that seem to have pretensions to boast of high improvements in the arts and sciences, and refined morality, have brought into general use, and guarded by many laws, a species of violence and tyranny which our more rude and barbarous but more honest ancestors detested. Is it not amazing that at a time when the rights of humanity are defined and understood with precision, in a country above all others fond of liberty,—that in such an age and in such a country we find men pro-

fessing a religion the most mild, humane, gentle, and generous, adopting such a principle, as repugnant to humanity as it is inconsistent with the Bible and destructive to liberty? Every thinking, honest man rejects it in speculation. How free in practice from conscientious motives! Would any one believe that I am master of slaves of my own purchase? I am drawn along by the general inconvenience of living here without them. I will not, I cannot justify it. However culpable my conduct, I will so far pay my devoir to virtue as to own the excellence and rectitude of her precepts, and lament my want of conformity to them. I believe a time will come when an opportunity will be offered to abolish this lamentable evil. Every thing we can do is to improve it, if it happens in our day; if not, let us transmit to our descendants, together with our slaves, a pity for their unhappy lot, and an abhorrence for slavery. If we cannot reduce this wished-for reformation to practice, let us treat the unhappy victims with lenity. It is the furthest advance we can make towards justice. It is a debt we owe to the purity of our religion, to show that it is at variance with that law which warrants slavery."

RANDOLPH.

That eccentric genius, John Randolph, of Roanoke, in a letter to William Gibbons, in 1820, says,—

"With unfeigned respect and regard, and as sincere *a deprecation* on the extension of slavery and its

horrors as any other man, be him whom he may, I am your friend, in the literal sense of that much-abused word. I say much-abused, because it is applied to the leagues of vice and avarice and ambition, instead of good-will toward man from love of Him who is the Prince of Peace."

While in Congress, he said,—

"Sir, I envy neither the heart nor the head of that man from the North who rises here to defend slavery on principle."

CLAY.

In the United States Senate, in 1850, he used the following memorable words:—

"I am extremely sorry to hear the Senator from Mississippi say that he requires, first the extension of the Missouri Compromise line to the Pacific, and also that he is not satisfied with that, but requires, if I understand him correctly, a positive provision for the admission of slavery south of that line. And now, sir, coming from a slave State as I do, I owe it to myself, I owe it to truth, I owe it to the subject, to say that no earthly power could induce me to vote for a specific measure for the introduction of slavery where it had not before existed, either south or north of that line. Coming as I do from a slave State, it is my solemn, deliberate, and well-matured determination that no power, no earthly power, shall compel me to vote for the positive introduction of slavery either south or north of that line. Sir, while you

reproach, and justly, too, our British ancestors for the introduction of this institution upon the continent of America, I am, for one, unwilling that the posterity of the present inhabitants of California and of New Mexico shall reproach us for doing just what we reproach Great Britain for doing to us. If the citizens of those territories choose to establish slavery, and if they come here with Constitutions establishing slavery, I am for admitting them with such provisions in their Constitutions; but then it will be their own work, and not ours, and their posterity will have to reproach them, and not us, for forming Constitutions allowing the institution of slavery to exist among them. These are my views, sir, and I choose to express them; and I care not how extensively or universally they are known."

Hear him further: he says,—

"So long as God allows the vital current to flow through my veins, I will never, never, never, by word or thought, by mind or will, aid in admitting one rood of free territory to the everlasting curse of human bondage."

TANEY—1819.

In the year 1819, the Rev. Jacob Gruber, a minister of the Baltimore Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, was tried in the Frederick County Court, Maryland, for "attempting to excite insubordination and insurrection among slaves" by *preaching* a sermon in which he set forth the evils

of slavery and the duties of masters. Mr. Roger B. Taney was one of the counsel for the defence; and in a pamphlet account of the trial, published in 1819, at Fredericktown, Md., by David Martin, and now lying before us, we find Mr. Taney's views of slavery, of the rights of man, and of the Declaration of Independence, *at that time*. For the benefit of Mr. Taney's good name, and for the purpose of letting every one compare his former opinions with his recent decision, we offer an extract from his opening speech for the defence :—

"Mr. Gruber did quote the language of our great act of National Independence, and insisted on the principles contained in that venerated instrument. He did rebuke those masters who, in the exercise of power, are deaf to the calls of humanity; and he warned them of the evils they might bring upon themselves. He did speak with abhorrence of those reptiles who live by trading in human flesh, and enrich themselves by tearing the husband from the wife, the infant from the bosom of the mother; and this I am instructed was the head and front of his offending. Shall I content myself," continued Mr. Taney, "with saying he had a right to say this? that there is no law to punish him? So far is he from being the object of punishment in any form of proceedings, that *we are prepared to maintain the same principles, and to use, if necessary, the same language here in the temple of justice*, and in the presence of those who are the ministers of the law.

A hard necessity, indeed, compels us to endure the evil of slavery for a time. It was imposed upon us by another nation, while we were yet in a state of colonial vassalage. It cannot be easily or suddenly removed. Yet while it continues, *it is a blot on our national character*, and every real lover of freedom confidently hopes that it will be effectually, though it must be gradually, wiped away; and earnestly looks for the means by which this necessary object may be best attained. And until it shall be accomplished, until the time shall come when we can point, without a blush, *to the language held in the Declaration of Independence*, every friend of humanity will seek to lighten the galling chain of slavery, and better, to the utmost of his power, the wretched condition of the slave. Such was Mr. Gruber's object in that part of his sermon of which I am now speaking. Those who have complained of him, and reproached him, will not find it easy to answer him; unless complaints, reproaches, and persecution shall be considered an answer."

THE END.

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